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HORATIO HOWARD BRENTON.

A NAVAL NOVEL.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE reader of the following pages will find them filled with details of the thoughts and feelings of human lives, which have really existed, and with the chief incidents in the career of one whom some of the greatest men of the past generation were proud to call their friend. The story here submitted for perusal, may be received without hesitation, as a genuine contribution to the history of humanity. The scenes described in it are photographs, and not pictures; the conversations recorded in it, actually fell from lips which are but just cold; family documents, of undeniable authenticity, and even the records of several of the public offices, might be, and may be, if necessary, produced to attest its truth.

But although this is the case, there has been a peculiar difficulty attending the publication of this story, which, from its very nature, must not be enlarged upon, and which renders it necessary to appeal to the reader's kind and candid consideration. He is asked to remember, during the perusal of this book, that it is a biography, and yet a novel; and that if it be a romance, it is a true one. At the same time, it is right to acknowledge, that much that might have been inserted has been suppressed, and that most of the names are feigned ones. The apology for this is so obvious, that none is offered.

To make an open parade of the secret history of a family, to expose to the public eye, the errors of passion, and the agonies of breaking hearts, is to assume a certain amount of responsibility ; and in the present instance, that responsibility has not been lightly undertaken. It is left for candour to decide how wisely or how well.

E. B.

HORATIO HOWARD BRENTON.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS born, as my family Bible indicates, at 11.55 p.m., on the 4th of May, 1794—where, not stated—son of Horatio Howard Brenton, Esq., and Charlotte (Hope), his wife.

My mother thought that I had some relationship, on the side of my grandfather, to the Earl of St. Vincent: at all events, he felt sufficient interest in my early career, to let me know, unmistakeably, his opinion whenever I acted contrary to his rules or ideas of naval discipline, or, rather, furnished me with his maxims to prevent my falling into error.

My father was once wealthy: how he became so, I know not; but his passion for purchasing estates which he could not readily pay for, involved him in mortgages, and, somehow, threw his affairs into such confusion, that his available property would not cover apparent liabilities. In this state having, as he was fond of saying, destroyed his own comfort for the welfare of his children, and having, at the period of my birth, been long at variance with his father, he died, leaving me under the guardianship of a supposed connection, Ellen Percy, and the husband of my mother's sister, Dr. Percy Howard, and, apparently, heir to some pittance.

I was at school when he died, at the Rev. Dr. Johnson's, at ———; and, as it was a matter of economy, necessity, or because I was too young, perhaps, to understand the loss of a parent who but seldom saw his wife or children, I was not sent for on the occurrence of this event, but continued to suffer a species of genteel imprisonment nearly one

year, whilst the wife of the schoolmaster made me feel how wrong it was to be dependent, and to be left at school, 'where the utmost attention, comfort, and kindness would be ensured to those interesting children whose parents, being absent, would experience another home.' Oh! yes—I did find it quite another home!—but did I not pine for *another?*—mine had been pretty comfortable.

When I did go home, it was to the Rectory of Ashdown Vale, some fifteen or twenty miles from London.

Here my mother, sister Charlotte, and Ellen Percy, were collected; the Rector, his wife (my aunt), and a brat cousin, Fanny Howard, the innocent cause of many little nameless miseries.

Ellen Percy was my guardian angel; she was supposed to be about eighteen, and, by her fortune, and understood position, was Chancellor of the Exchequer, if not Prime Minister, in our household. Charlotte was six—Fanny, five—I was eight—my very

pretty nurse, and servant to Ellen, Louisa Hardy, eighteen—her father, the butler, about forty-eight.

When I think upon this portion of my life, it seems to have been all summer. When I first entered upon it, after the coldness and harshness of school, I almost feared to enjoy it; it seemed too exquisitely happy. Often and often did I lean out of my casement, of a morning, whilst the blackbird was fretting the summer jennetin with his golden bill, and almost thank God for the friends whom he had given me, for the beauty of the world in which he had placed me. A kind of shame withheld my words. It was now that I began to feel that Ellen Percy was something more to me than my sister or my cousin, or even than my mother, whose cold shyness and melancholy bearing towards me, were, by a kind of tacit consent, never alluded to amongst us. My young guardian was very beautiful; her hair was of a golden chestnut colour, and seemed to have entangled amongst it a perpetual

sunlight; she was of middle height, and of an exquisite figure, to which a bust, a little smaller than is usual in English women, gave an air of exceeding delicacy. Her arms were suffused with a faint rosy glister, and blushed almost as readily as her face. She never said she loved me; but sometimes, in our summer afternoon rambles, when I sat at her feet, sorting the flowers which we had gathered, she would gaze at me with such deep, earnest eyes, that I would fling my arms about her neck, and draw her head down to mine, in a burst of irresistible affection. But always after I had done this, she would seem full of painful thought, and be a little severe to me.

As I am speaking of the long rambles which I used to take with Ellen, and which formed the chief charm of my existence at this time, I may mention here an incident which occurred in one of them, and which I entirely forgot until subsequent circumstances brought it painfully to my remembrance. On reaching,

on the occasion to which I allude, a little woodland path, which almost always formed a portion of a walk, I found, lying on the path, a letter directed 'to Miss Ellen Percy.'

"You must have dropped this yesterday," I said, giving it to my companion; "but how cold you look, Ellen—shall I fetch your shawl?"

"Yes, do, dear, if you please."

And off I ran. I found Charlotte in the garden, and made her give me her scarf, and was returning with so much speed, that I did not see a tall man, who was standing at the entrance of the path in which I had left Ellen, until I had stumbled against him with considerable violence. I looked up, with a smile, to make my apologies, when my words were suddenly checked by the ghastly expression of hatred, which glared from the man's face, the lower part of which was hidden by a handkerchief, stained with blood, which he held up to his mouth. I passed on; and from a feeling, which I could explain neither then

nor now, said nothing to Ellen of the circumstance. But I had reason afterwards to remember, that instead of permitting me to arrange the scarf around her shoulders, she wrapped it round her hands, like a muff, and expressed a great anxiety to return home immediately.

It must not be supposed that, during my stay at home, my education, either mental or physical, was neglected.

Mr. Howard found means to make the boy of nine his companion, and instructed me in every manly exercise and amusement. He took me daily, accompanied by his niece, through all the houses of the poor, to the schools, and, in the evenings, joined me in his field at the back of the Rectory, where cricket, or some game or amusement for the evening, engrossed the interest of all ages, and kept up the animosity against him of the only 'Brewer's Drudge,' who hung out a sign in our hamlet, and who was eventually compelled to emigrate.

Under the particular and unceasing care of this amiable Rector, and the patronage of the more than loved Ellen, I was not slow in advancing. He was a great geologist, chemist, turner, and carpenter—and I never was out of his company. I did not let the time pass without becoming not only bitten, but even mischievously determined on carrying my small stock of knowledge to its utmost extent. Every useful book, both elementary as well as amusing, was purchased for me. I had made great proficiency in Latin and Greek, for my age; but all this was doomed to be eclipsed by a preference for the sciences.

Some of our summer vacations were passed at a brother of the Rector's, a naval surgeon, residing not far from Portsmouth; and, having made the acquaintance of young Herbert Fitzjames, then a middy on board the *Amazon*, I was not slow in picking up naval ideas, and a most unaccountable desire to follow up fireworks. I was literally mad after gunpowder, and this soon became the only, but eternal

cause of misery to all about me. At home, every indulgence, under the immediate superintendence of my guardian, who had a very light gun made for me, was permitted, and I shot well. But this would not satisfy me, and I was guilty of secretly buying gunpowder, and making blasts in clay, which drove the pieces placed over the hole high in the air, and delighted me. I was even thoughtless enough to drive the ducks near these blasts to witness their fright. One, alas! fell a victim, and I 'succeeded to' my first 'severe admonition.'

When first that ice is broken, how frequent 'admonitions' follow!—and yet, my guardian angel Ellen had made me feel deeply the heighth from which I had fallen. She did not fail to show, by her tears, how warm an interest she felt for her adopted pet—how it pained her to upbraid!

It soon became evident that I was becoming spoiled, in a household, every member of which seemed to have no other object in life than to make me happy. And I was again packed off

to school, where, for two years, I became the pet of my master, the dread of his wife, and the evil genius of gunpowder in the establishment.

My master was of a very peculiar turn. He invariably mixed himself with the scholars, joined in their games, illustrated their studies, and advanced them immensely. He prohibited the use of gunpowder, under the most severe penances; yet never could be induced, by his heartless wife, to punish me for what he always deemed a 'proof of spirit.' But he punished others severely—not for buying gunpowder, but for petty falsehood, and for tale-bearing against me when found out. This maxim he inculcated with *birch*.

"Sir, if you had told me the honest truth, you would have disarmed me; I could not nerve my arm to punish an honourable boy. You, Mr. Howard, are charged with being the culprit. You fearlessly, with that truth-telling brow, could not deceive any one, if asked a direct question. Is it true, that you purchased that powder? If I err, you will

honestly put me right. These two boys bought or begged of you the powder found on them, and they now charge you with being the sole actor. What reply have you to make?"

"I decline any reply, sir."

"Then, sir, I shall punish *you*, by ordering you to *bed*—as for these, I know how to deal with them."

They were, I found, birched.

I did not now dislike school as I had formerly; but the passion for a life on the sea—with which my acquaintance with Fitzjames had inspired me—became uncontrollable; and I determined to do something which should convince people that I had no intention of passing any considerable portion of my life in writing copies or learning the Latin Grammar. In all my sorrows I flew for consolation to my favourite gunpowder, and I determined it should aid me in escaping from my present monotonous existence. I took my measures with secrecy and dispatch, and I

arrived very nearly at the completion of a mine, at which I laboured some three weeks, which was to upset a wall of some notoriety, and which would have entailed great danger and great expense to repair. My savings, and various modes known to boys at school—catching birds, making and rigging sloops, &c.,—enabled me to provide about three pounds of common blasting powder. But I was providentially saved from the disgrace which must have resulted from the fulfilment of my plan; for, on the Thursday preceding the Saturday on which I had intended my great explosion to take place, I received a note from the Rector, stating that his brother, Dr. Howard, had been appointed surgeon of the *Cleopatra*, Captain Lofty, and he had been offered a vacancy for a youngster as volunteer. The letter was thus couched :—

"My Dear Horatio,

"My brother has on offer of an entry in the Royal Navy for a volunteer.

The captain is a very strict disciplinarian—flogs even his 'middies' (if they deserve it). Turn the matter well in your own mind—think deeply as to whether you would risk all in such a ship, and let me know your decision.

"I will not advise.

"Yours affectionately,

"PERCY HOWARD.

"March 1, 1806.

"P.S.—Make your yea or nay known to your master."

No thought was necessary—I was now twelve years old, and more manly than others at fourteen; I had a pre-disposition to see and serve with one of these Tartars—I had schooled myself into a perfect conviction that I would gain his favour by the most diligent attention to my duty; I wrote, "Yes, immediately, if you please," through the letter diagonally, and handed it at once to the master, who was reading Dr. Howard's letter; I could see a tear in one corner of his eye, as he caught my

hand with a convulsed grasp, and drew me down stairs to his wife; when, throwing himself into his easy chair, and both letters on the table, he said, "Read those, and see how nearly you would have spoiled all." She read them and cried, and left the room.

My master had my kit packed, and after dinner addressing the boys, and making each shake hands with the 'future hero of the school,' under three hearty cheers he handed me into a post-chaise, and himself conducted me to the Rectory. He remained that night, taking an affectionate farewell, but in the morning he departed before any of us awoke.

CHAPTER II.

We set off immediately, and I was filled with an intoxication of delight; I pitied every one whom I met on the road, for not being about to join H. M. S., *Cleopatra*, as a volunteer. The quiet fields seemed quieter to me; and the old red-brick houses that couched like sleeping lions, amongst the woodlands, appeared to belong to quite another world than mine. As I passed the sign-posts that directed to this retired village, or to that modest town, I could scarcely refrain from a shout of triumph that I was bound for the great sea-port, where

the masts of the vessels were to be seen over the roofs of the houses.

Forty-eight hours spent at an hotel in Portsmouth, saw all my kit most carefully packed, marked, and stowed in one chest, and a small washing-box ; such being the order of the ship.

The Doctor had dismantled and let his house, and was living on board. He did not call for me until the morning of the memorable, and, to me, eventful 4th of March. He then introduced his captain—not knowing that I had met him the preceding afternoon — an upright, very handsome man, of five feet eleven, elegantly dressed, and, in manner, the most accomplished, fascinating gentleman. You could trace in the commanding forehead, the muscular eyebrow, and the curl of the lip, the habit of self-command, of restraining some passion by which he felt encumbered. His stay was short, his pat on the cheek with a little caress of the back of the fingers, grateful ; but when he said, "I am sure we shall be good friends," my heart jumped !

When I looked round I found all were in tears, nobody could tell why, but the bright sun shone through them all; and the first maternal caress I ever experienced, then shook me like a thunderstorm. I had found a mother in essence, at the moment we were, perhaps, doomed to part for ever! Who can describe the agony of that day's parting? I will only name the characters—the first, too sacred to repeat—next, my sister; she had been at a boarding-school, and, as our holiday times did not chime in well together, excepting at Christmas, I had seen little of her during the last two years; how she raved; implored me to write "only to her; she would tell all the news; she would keep all my secrets." As for Ellen, her grief was intense; she had packed away numerous mementos, which I had yet to discover when I unpacked my sea-chest. Many books, such as she knew I prized, had little sentences, known only to ourselves, written in their margins; they were her

maxims, and oh! how valuable they proved to her, as well as myself! Then, Louisa Hardy, her own maid, my nurse, attendant, and worshipper—the Rector, his wife, and Fanny, now breaking into an interesting girl, and somewhat a pet; all had their last words, not forgetting the good old butler, who clung by me to the last, till his 'God bless you, Master Horatio,' sent him off to hide his tears.

I was stupified. I had only now discovered how very deeply I was cared for, and how deep a debt I had incurred to so many individuals.

I was not a light-headed youth, but I was as light-hearted as any son of Adam. It was necessary that I should show myself able to command my feelings. I made the attempt; the Doctor seized my hand, placed his arm horizontally before me, and, with his own deep, thrilling 'God bless you all. I will take care of him!' waved off any movement to follow; and I was hurried down to my

tailor's, shipped my uniform, and, meeting the captain with his barge's crew attending, went off, with the orders for sailing, to that beautiful frigate of that day, H.M.S., *Cleopatra*.

Off flew the barge to Spithead; but such a set of bargemen!—then known as coach horses. Let the reader fancy such a set as Noah never entered or discharged from the ark, at least with tails. Fifteen of the finest of Nature's moulds, five feet ten inches, to six feet in stature, broad in proportion, but beautiful in model. It was cold, and Captain Lofty—'our captain,' *par excellence* in future—would not allow his men to be unnecessarily exposed, overworked, or in any manner ill-used. They, therefore, were in fine cloth blue trousers, very full; white stockings; and polished shoes, barely two inches within the toe; scarlet kerseymere waistcoats; shirts, very elaborately worked in the collars by their ladye-loves; a flowing Barcelona; black glazed hats, with *Cleopatra*, in gold letters on a blue garter, in

the front; flowing ends of broad ribbon, fluttering in their eyes; and queues—such queues as would astonish even the Duke of Kent!—but of them anon.

We had now reached the frigate; everything had been clearly anticipated. How I got on board, passed the guard and assembled officers, to receive their captain, I scarce can tell—I was entirely bewildered; and led by the hand by the Doctor, up to the first-lieutenant, he most respectfully touched his hat, saying, "Come on board, sir;" and, "This, sir, is young Howard, come to pay his respects."

"Fine lad. Aye—aye—belay there. You are welcome, youngster, to the *Cleopatra*—in the second-lieutenant's watch—and forty-eight hours allowed to sling your hammock—'haul taut the yard tackles.' You will breakfast with me, youngster, the first morning watch you keep—mind that, Doctor."

Down I dived with the Doctor and wherefore I know not, but the captain's coxswain informed me — that, until I got my sea-legs,

he was directed to keep a bright eye on me. I again went on deck.

One short sententious exclamation, as the first-lieutenant came up from the cabin, where he had held some little conference with the captain—

"Silence!"

As if silence had not prevailed in that well-ordered ship.

"Where is Mr. Ball?"

"Here, sir."

"How's the tide?"

"Just on the turn, sir."

An eagle-looking, sharp-faced, little bow-legged being, with a chain hanging round his neck, like a squirrel, held his pipe in hand, evidently reading the first-lieutenant's thoughts —"Up anchor!" had barely escaped his lips, when everything appeared, for a few moments, in utter confusion; but before I could have written the words, all was again attention; the capstan bars, the radii of that great lever power which was to raise the

anchor, were fixed, and swifted—that is, a rope extended on the outer extremities from end to end, forming an outer rim, by which all could be made to bear an equal strain; and the bars, also, if carelessly left unpinned, prevented from flying out and committing havock, as in the late case of H.M.S., ———, at Plymouth.

Each officer having duly reported all ready, at their respective stations;—"Heave round," was given by our gallant first-lieutenant; and I omit all the other well-known operations. The ship was under-weigh, and, with a leading wind, stood out past St. Helen's, cleared the Isle of Wight, and bore up, down Channel. Our instructions, I learned, were to call in at Torbay, for any of the stray convoy left behind by the previous ship of the line; to see them safely up to her charge, and proceed on to join the Commander-in-Chief, at Halifax. This, somehow or other, had fallen to my knowledge, through the good Doctor; and, when I first made it known in our berth (we

had two), such a cheer broke forth from my new messmates, that I almost deemed them mad. What could the name of Halifax imply? I began almost to fancy that I had committed some egregious blunder, and that this was a laugh at me; but I was wrong. I learned better afterwards, and I would again join in the cheer, if I should be sent back to that station.

However, I must first describe *our* mess:— I was permitted, by the captain's wish, to join the starboard berth; the caterer was the clerk —one assistant surgeon, and all the youngsters. The other was occupied solely by master's mates, supernumeraries, and midshipmen, all sent there by higher authority, the mates alone being nominated by the captain.

The clerk was a good scholar, an excellent man, and well qualified to preserve order, in which he was assisted by the assistant-surgeon, an Englishman, and lately serving in one of the royal hospitals. But, to my great joy and astonishment, whom should I find an invalid

and confined to his cot, but my old friend, Herbert Fitzjames, whom I had often met at Portsmouth, and who was now a supernumerary to join the admiral's ship on the North American station.

After due initiation, by being cut down—finding my level, after the ordinary course of boys—behold me, then, one of the aspirants of her H.M.S., *Cleopatra*—sea-sickness mastered, and able to eat quite as much as any reasonable creature should be permitted.

The officers in general did not much interest me. The second-lieutenant, a very smart, gallant young fellow, Saumarez, was a very distant connection of the captain, but he acknowledged no relationship but the ties of duty: all were his children, and all felt it by some channel. Saumarez sent for me on the fourth day, addressing me thus:—"Now, young fellow, you have been placed in my watch to learn your duty; I am very young myself, so is our captain—and yet no seaman on board can look him straight in the face;

he would look you hull down in five seconds, and, before you could turn the hands up about ship, he would have all canvass on her, and wear her, as the studding sails went aloft to mystify the enemy—in fact, no man can study his dodges, and the only way to become his friend, is to follow in his wake: therefore, youngster, when once you get hold of his coat tails, if he does not wear a jacket, hold on, for your life—for, if he ever shakes you off, he is too slippery to catch a second time."

This I saw clearly. I was told, by my messmates, "to take very particular care of my nails—never allow them to be faulty, and never too long to break—moreover, until I became a master's mate, that a stripe of tar, which would not wash out, was not a blemish in the *Cleopatra*."

Lieutenant Saumarez added:—"Now, my boy, I will give you just the outline of what I expect, what I did, and what—if you are wise—you will try to come up to. During the day the captain and first-lieutenant will not allow

you to sleep. But come to me at ten and two, in the first and middle watches, fully prepared to inform me of any positive acquirement in nautical knowledge, and I will then give you your orders. — Quartermaster."

"Sir?"

"You will take this young gentleman under your especial tuition. You will instruct him in knotting, splicing, and all other handiwork; and you will further explain to him how to clear the wreck, when masts or yards are carried away—how to send fresh ones up; in fact, every night you will be satisfied that he has learned some new point of duty on which I may examine him."

"Aye, aye, sir; I understand you."

Our first-lieutenant, Noble, was a specimen *sui generis*. No one could understand him; he was a splendid specimen of a nondescript. He was dry, witty, funny, pleasant, severe to himself—could take a liberty, and it would be deemed a mark of the highest compliment

by any one—so much was he beloved and respected; a man among men, the leader of the boys on shore; and, yet, no one ever ventured to become familiar, or take a liberty with him! The captain never could make him out. But there he had his match. He was just a little further off that incomprehensible being. There was this difference between them:—every one respected and would lay down their lives for the captain; and yet, excepting the surgeon, he had no friend. In fact, as I afterwards found, 'he was too clever.'

And now I was fairly at sea, and never thought to ask myself whether the reality came up to my ideal. It was so different, indeed, that the comparison never entered into my head. In the October of the year, pacing at twilight amongst the fallen leaves of the garden, the great desire of my heart used to come upon me, and fill me with an irresistible longing to fly from all common and accustomed things; I felt jealous, if I

saw the wind swaying the branches of a tree, for I desired that the whole air of heaven might be expended on the sails of the ship which was heaving on my imagination. But, now that I had attained it, what I longed for seemed as far distant as ever; and I had no time to think of it, for I was overwhelmed with a new sense—the perception of human character. What Saumarez told me about Captain Lofty, somehow took a strong hold on my mind, and I found myself taking a great deal of pains to discover how far this account was correct; I soon discovered this examination of character to be the most interesting pursuit I had ever entered on; and I pursued it in respect to all the ship's crew who came under my notice. I don't want to make myself out to have been an extraordinary boy; and I merely mention this matter here, because I have found, and am convinced, that one of the first results, and chief moral advantages of a naval life, is the habit it gives of judging of men and human actions

correctly. I leave others to find the reason for this; I merely state the fact.

But, if it were not quite what I had expected, I was not long in making up my mind that the life I now led was a glorious one. I liked all my messmates, and was amongst them one of those pets which people treat roughly to show their liking for. This was well; for it helped to correct that tendency to cling to those around me, which was the fault in my character, which had been much fostered by the peculiar position of my childhood. I can scarcely describe the terms of my friendship with Fitzjames. When we were alone, we were very confidential; and I believe I concealed nothing from him, either of thought or feeling; he was older than I, and a great deal more advanced in the power of expression; and this was one reason of my liking for him—for he gave me words for my thoughts. But when we were in the company of other persons, a sort of reserve grew up between us, which I could never understand;

but, so it was, and my most desperate efforts to throw it off were unavailing. As far as looks are concerned, he was one of the men whom women think very handsome. His features were delicate, and his complexion light. Perhaps, this was the reason of his having adopted a haw-haw manner, and independent bearing, which his personal appearance scarcely warranted. He was more successfully impertinent than any other man I ever met with; often saying things to his superiors which they took no notice of, because their self-respect bade them conceal that they had ever suffered such insults. Between Captain Lofty and Fitzjames, however, there always existed the most precise manner; for each knew that the slightest deviation from this would lead to a more than ordinary quarrel.

As one of the chief incidents of my early life on board ship, I must mention here that, as I had quite as much curiosity implanted in me as any of the weaker sex, I employed the first quiet day that I had in the after-hold with

a very clear lantern—for there our chests were placed on a very clean platform—in an examination of my chest — that wonderful chest to a middy.

Now, by the previous arrangement of the ship before alluded to, each washing-box contained, in a tray, all the washing apparatus, and, beneath, a change of clothes. If more was wanting, it could be got at between 9 a.m. and noon, or between 2 and 4 p.m.; so that officers could dress to dine with the lieutenants or captain.

The object in describing the contents of Mr. Howard's chest, is simply to impart to friends, preparing children for sea, this plain advice. Do not obtain your outfit in London. It is more completely effected at one of the great seaports. Portsmouth, or Plymouth—or, by a list furnished by them, and recommendation to their London correspondent. Many expensive articles are avoided until the lad is able to take care of them. They are not subject to ruin or robbery, and the chest is sufficiently

free for the proper care of its contents. And how many articles of Johnny Newcomes, who leave them carelessly about, are seen daily thrown over the side, the owner scarce daring to recognize them. Add to this:—The seaport, or naval uniform, tailor makes clothes adapted to *wear;* and there should always be made an especial calculation on the probable growth in the first year.

But Horatio Howard had his chest stuffed to profusion; and many days did it occupy him before he waded through the tender reminiscences which everywhere met his eye. How he was to bestow them puzzled him. But the good surgeon was not idle; he foresaw his difficulty, and took all the books and valuables into his cabin; and, being himself much of a similar turn to his brother, was delighted to carry forward the studies of his *protegé.* His library was also complete, and to that of the captain all officers had free access, as well as the use of the fore-cabin table, until 3 p.m.

But in every leaf of the gems, furnished by Ellen, marks of pencil, and frequent slips of paper, bearing maxims, which I had resolved never to forget, if possible, met my eye.

My dear mother's present comprised a Bible and Prayer-book, with chapters and verses noted for examination.

My sister's, a light, travelling, expanding writing-case, fully stored, and 'Write, oh, write; do, Horatio, write,' pencilled repeatedly.

Nautical and philosophical books, a sextant, complete drawing-case of instruments, and colours, and prismatic compass, by the Rector. Little Fanny sent a very timid pocket-book, with 'forget-me-not,' and an ominous 'Oh!' in faint pencil, was very visible to my keen eye; but it did not reach me over the blue wave. I was yet free.

Poor Fanny! When I see in my looking-glass a face, which is something like that of a sea-cow under the influence of tooth-ache,

I need scarcely blush to call to mind that when you were a little girl you loved me. As I turned over the leaves of that little book, I remembered how you and I returned alone from the ruins of the old abbey, and came across the Hundred-acres, past the ruins of the windmill, which was burnt down in the winter. There was one star in the sky, and the poplars were like golden feathers in the setting sunlight.

"Everything," said Fanny, "seems rising up with us into the sky."

I have often thought of the holy calm and peace of the hour and the landscape, which inspired the little girl with these words, and received a soothing influence from the memory. But I was not in love with Fanny.

My pretty nurse had sent me such a gem of an honest, useful housewife—and, no mistake! Ellen had stored it by her liberality; but it was a treasure. Who can ever forget the nurse of his childhood, particularly if very young and very amiable? But the gift which I did not

expect, and which was sealed and directed to me by the hand of my old schoolmaster, consisted of two beautiful editions of English and Latin dictionaries, and his own beautiful prayer, written on note paper, and addressed 'to his young friend,' never to be omitted by night or day. I, indeed, felt that I had lost a tie not to be replaced.

But in the midst of my reverie, and before I had half packed my chest, I heard a stir upon deck. In I tumbled all; up the hatchway; and, before the boatswain's pipe had sent forth its note, causing awful silence, followed by a slow 'Hands, make sail!'

I was close at the captain's jacket; he had no coat-tails; something which no one could comprehend was in the wind. We had been for two days keeping southerly of our course, when the captain suddenly came on deck, called for his glass, gave one glance, and sent for the first-lieutenant. In a very quiet tone he said—"Make sail." All imaginable sail on a wind was then set; but, when all was

ready, he observed—"Keep away two points —then dead before the wind—Haul the yards—then luff close to the wind!" Just at this moment there was much uneasiness apparent among the officers of the watch, when the officer, sent aloft to look out, reported "a large ship dead to windward." It was reported to the captain. "Very well, Mr. Noble"—the name of the look-out—"put it down—clear for action."

It was now nearly four p.m., and the captain and officers dined. About eight, the stranger was very clearly seen from the deck, but evidently did not see us. As the darkness increased, the ship was trimmed, sails kept well full—the engine used to wet them. We drew rapidly on her, and, by two a.m., were well ahead of her, and tacked, bringing her dead under our lee. All was now intense anxiety. The captain several times came up to me very fidgetty, patted my cheek, and gave me a note to carry down to the surgeon. Little did I dream of its contents. It em-

powered him, if he thought fit, to imprison me below, as I could not be of any use on deck, and could not possibly derive any credit, whatever courage I might display. He was very indignant, and sent me up again, but advised me to keep out of the captain's sight. This I managed by sticking to my friend Lieutenant Saumarez, until we got very close. I then stole up the ladder, and was very near the captain, when he threw the ship suddenly round, hauled all yards, and lay with his broadside full on the stranger's weather bow. It was almost an electric movement, and evidently much disconcerted the stranger, who, bearing away a little, was hailed, in a clear voice of thunder—

"Alter your course one point before you answer, friend or foe, and I sink you!"

"This is the British *Cleopatra!*"

"This is the British *Cambrian!*"

"Sorry for you!" sullenly dropped Captain Lofty.

"Come on board, if you please; up courses

—square the head-yards, Mr. Noble—head-sheets flying!"

He seemed yet to doubt his senses, until the adversary, in unmistakeable English, called the gig away, and Captain —— came alongside, was received, went below, up, away, and off! Daylight saw nothing of the *Cambrian.*

It was a fearful chance of mistake. She was a much larger and heavier ship, and any unlucky gun might have sent one or both ships to the bottom. They had not seen us until we tacked ahead, and then they knew that we were English. Her lantern was hoisted at the peak, but had gone out. They heard the orders given in English, and felt no fear of attack. I was not a hero this time. We now steered on for Halifax.

CHAPTER III.

One morning, the captain, contrary to custom, came on deck before eight—called me to him, and said—

"You will breakfast with me, sir?"

"With pleasure, sir."

"That's right, my boy. Mr. Noble, this is your teaching, I suppose?"

"No sir—indeed, not."

"You will also give me the pleasure?"

At breakfast, he observed:—

"Young fellow, I think I sent you with a note to the doctor, the other night?" making a very significant signal, by eye, to Noble.

"Yes, sir; I delivered it."

"Well, sir, and how came you on deck, sir, after that?"

"I obeyed the last order I received, sir."

"No more, sir?"

"No more, sir; unless, sir, you should ask me questions which might pain me to answer."

"Never, my boy," said the captain.—"Noble, put this gentleman in my barge."

"But, sir, Mr. ——?" enquired Noble.

"I shall promote him to a cutter—at least. Noble, you understand me."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Noble; and then I thought I had fairly got hold of one coat tail.

That day I was the guest—the especial guest — of the first-lieutenant, in the gun-room, where I was paid great attention. The day following, being in the cabin with Lieutenant Saumarez, Dr. Howard, and the invalid Herbert Fitzjames, Saumarez was questioned as to my progress, and gave me much more credit than I deserved; and the captain replied—

"Sir, any attention you show that boy, will meet with ample return,"—leaving us all in doubt as to his absolute meaning.

After dinner, Dr. Howard called me into his cabin, and with tears in his eyes, observed—

"Horatio, I have known Captain Lofty many years, and it gratifies me beyond expression to find that he has taken a liking, not to you, as he says, but to your truthful mode, and manly bearing under all circumstances. But you stand on an awful precipice. There is no human being, with whom I am acquainted, that excels our captain in every honourable sentiment. But his standard is so high, and his discrimination so nice, that he is dangerous to himself, and to all who approach him in a professional point of view. He cannot allow for the weakness of others. You must, therefore, if you intend to remain here, make up your mind to devote yourself to your professional course; and, for a time, at least, discard all thoughts of the customary enjoyments natural to boys of your age and tem-

perament. Now, recede you cannot. I only trust that the intoxicating draught you seem to have imbibed, may never throw you off your guard; be manly, open, tell the truth *coute qui coute*—one white lie is the father of many black falsehoods, never to be wiped out! Lastly, one more, and that the most important caution—never let any soul on board believe that you seek for notice. Take it, assume it all as additional *duty imposed upon you.* Never discover a secret—never be the indirect cause even of a tale."

Our course was now very tedious, but brought no sense of monotony to me, for every day some new incident—some fresh conversation with Fitzjames, or some cherished word from Captain Lofty, made my life larger and happier. When six weeks had elapsed, we struck soundings on the Great Bank of Newfoundland; I had always been a great fisherman, and was well prepared by my friend, the doctor, with the necessary lines and salted herrings; the instant the soundings were

declared my line was down, and the quarter-master of my watch helped me to haul up two very fine cod.

One was sent to the captain, the other to the gun room; and down went line again. This time I hooked a very fine halibut. I was looking with a bright eye on the first-lieutenant, when he came towards me with a hurricane, at least, overhanging—"Surely, Mr. Howard, you have not been fishing?"

"Yes, sir, I have caught two cod, sir, and one fine halibut, under the stern; can't get him in, sir."

"I am very sorry for you. It is expressly against the captain's, as well as my order, unless permission be given."

"Shall I let them go, sir?"

"No, my boy, I must go to the captain, and explain."

"Oh! let me go, I am sure he cannot be angry when he knows I never knew of the order, or his wish; but, perhaps, I might get

some one else into trouble ; do go, Mr. Noble, tell him all—tell him how unhappy I am."

For the first time in my life I was touched by the sense of wrong-doing. I had often been punished, but the wrongful act and the punishment had always passed away from my moral feelings with equal facility. But now it was quite different; the world seemed a little less real, and I had a kind of sudden consciousness, that I ought to have remembered that things were not always to go on in the same easy manner. How beautiful everything is, I thought to myself, as I watched with that momentary quickness of vision which sorrow gives us, the cheerful activity of the men, the splendour of the half-furled sails, the light and shade on spar and deck and bulwark. But they were not beautiful for me, for I had done wrong. In one moment, I said to myself, I have done that which must taint my whole life. This can never be forgotten, although forgiven.

The stern captain was behind me, all the

time, witnessed the whole dialogue, and exclaimed—"Well, sir, I will not be angry this time, because the fault does not lie with you."

"Oh! yes, indeed it does, I caught them."

"Well, then, nobody is to blame but I and Mr. Noble. Hear your punishment, Mr. Howard, the fish which you have taken, by neglecting your duty in your watch, will be served out to the sick, and others, on board; but neither the captain, officers, or midshipmen, can accept of them. Now, Mr. Noble, turn the hands up to fish for two hours; lower the jolly-boat to secure heavy fish, and let no one put a line over abaft the main channels."

"Is Mr. Howard to be allowed to fish?"

"That, sir, is not within my department. The hands are called—acquaint me at the expiration of two hours."

I could hardly recover courage to fish; but the good first-lieutenant, said—"Come my boy, you shall fish for me;" and, having secured the services of a man to haul in, who

stood behind us, I hooked no less than twenty-eight fish, four of which were of the largest halibut, averaging one hundred and forty pounds.

I dined that day in the gun room, and steered very clear of the captain next day; but he called me to him, patted my cheek, and upbraided me for not sending him any of my fish. "But Mr. Noble did not forget me." Shortly after, the captain's steward sailed up under my lee, and said—"The captain will be glad of your company at dinner, sir."

The dinner-party was unusually silent—arising, possibly, from the heavy, foggy weather, and our anxiety to make the land or Sambro light-house before dark. This we failed to do. But, the following morning, at four o'clock, on the haze clearing off, we found ourselves close to the light-house, and distinctly heard the wash of the sea. It was my middle-watch. It had been customary with Mr. Saumarez to send me to bed at two, after answering all the questions; but, as we

neared the land, sleep had no charms for me. The captain, I imagine, had not gone to bed, as he was up before the officer got to the ladder to descend; and, observing him about to do so, very quietly observed—

"Mr. Saumarez, you were very nearly committing yourself."

"Indeed, sir! I am not aware in what manner."

"Quitting the deck when in soundings, or in danger, instead of sending the mate of the watch."

"If I thought the ship in danger, sir, I ——"

"Hard a port—quick!" cried the captain—there was a heavy roll to windward—a growling noise under the keel—and a gentle shake or quiver. "And a half twain," port channel. "By the mark, seven, starboard." Up flew the hands—"Silence!" in a voice of thunder. Could it come out of that frame? It did.

"All right, Mr. Noble. Hands, trim sails, and then muster the watch."

Mr. Saumarez was not again noticed doing duty on the *Cleopatra's* decks; he was taken suddenly ill—not from any harshness on the part of the captain, as he told me, but from his conviction that he had lost his confidence, and disgrace must follow the next fault. I said—

"Oh, sir! but if you explained all to him, surely he would forgive."

"Forgive *me*, Mr. Howard! Surely, you are mad. I am the party outraged."

I stared at him with terror, and thought the sooner he quitted the better.

"But, Mr. Howard, you have excited my curiosity. Pray, tell me how *you* think I have offended *Captain Lofty?*"

"I am only a child, sir—how can I have an opinion? But I have since read the order, and Mr. Noble told the other officers, when we struck soundings; and you, sir, in particular, that you could not leave the deck."

"Well, sir?"

"Then, when the ship was in danger, and

the captain was not disposed to treat you unkindly, he merely reminded you of his written order; and you, by attempting to lead him into an argument, very nearly lost the ship. Every one says so."

"Do they, my boy?"

"Yes, indeed they do; but they wonder that the captain is not angry. Pray do let Mr. Noble arrange this!"

"Never! You have told me too much. I am wrong—very wrong; but I must suffer; no officer would sit at the table with me if I degraded myself by remaining."

"Well, sure, I am only a boy, and I shall feel your loss very much—and so will the captain. Pray see Mr. Noble before you do anything rashly."

"Well, my boy, I promise *you, privately,* I will say no more."

He saw Mr. Noble, who advised an exchange; told him the captain would do all he could for him, and he must keep silent on all that had passed. Thus parted Mr. Saumarez.

It caused a very great blank until a new officer was found to supply his place; as he was selected by Mr. Noble, and was well aware of the captain's peculiar austerity; it was expected that all would go well.

Lieutenant Saumarez was a man whose character had very much the same outward appearance as that of Captain Lofty; but it struck you that there was some great difference at bottom; Captain Lofty seemed oppressed by the natural force of some ruling principle within him, and Mr. Saumarez to be perpetually tormented by a fierce determination to mould his character into a form for which it was ill suited.

CHAPTER IV.

The run up Halifax Harbour, saluting the flag, and all the excitement of a first visit to a British colonial port, was, to me, a delicious treat.

But who remembers Halifax in 1806. I am almost afraid to mention men or dates, or I shall be known. I had letters from Sir J. B., and others, and found a most warm reception from all the leading families at Halifax; and Herbert Fitzjames was an old friend of P. W., who also introduced us into some very amiable families. But our captain was the idol of

everyone—the admiral's family, the governor, the bishop, judges, collector, &c.—and, as I was barge midshipman, I am able to recollect, as many will recollect, the parties to Birch Cove—the Lodge—the Rockingham—Miller's Island, &c., and the songs which were sung as we rowed back at night. I can hardly believe my senses, now, that such things were: they would hardly be credited, if told in all their actual pomp and circumstance, at this day. Nor do I imagine, even if I proclaimed myself by a term never to be erased from the memories of all concerned, that they would recognize me by name. They will, however, when I come to take leave, possibly open their eyes and say—

"Good gracious!—he alive!"

However, wherever the captain went, there the ladies would have me. I was ruined, and so petted and caressed, that my heart was hardened: I forgot my home, forgot my letters, and joined in the giddy round like any other boy of twelve years old.

Captain Lofty, Fitzjames, and I, were constantly at the Bower. It happened that its inmates were bound by ties of intimacy to each of our families; and, even had it not been so, there was sufficient fascination in the Bower to account for our fondness for being there. The father was a tall, handsome man, with eyes like stars, shining under grey, bushy eyebrows; he saw everything, and never took any notice of anything, except to add to the enjoyment of those around him. The mother would sometimes burst in among us, and take part in all our mirth and amusements; but it generally ended—after she had flirted with all of us, and made her daughters almost seriously jealous—in her taking her husband's arm, and leaving us to feel that happy homage of the heart with which she inspired all who knew her. The two girls, Anne and Bessie, were open-browed, sweet-faced things, with quick, lithe figures; and, I don't know how it was, but the wind always seemed to be blowing into their soft but subtle eyes, and putting

the hair off their rose-blush cheeks, and moulding their dresses most coquettishly about their limbs. I cannot write fiction, or, I suppose, I should not say so abruptly as I must, that Bessie loved Captain Lofty, and Fitzjames loved Bessie. I will not say that, when the lovely girl came hurrying down the garden walk to meet him—in her own hurried, but ever graceful manner, passing through the green allies like a ship's figure-head through the green waves—that the strong man's hand did not tremble, or that his eye was not suffused with a deeper colour. But it was only the answer of one warm life to another, and not the reply of heart to heart. "Captain Lofty loves you so much that he can love no one else," Anne would say to me, whilst Bessie was sitting near. Then Fitzjames would laugh, and he and Bessie would wander out, where the scent of the ripe grass was like a spirit in the evening air; and the lights, here and there, in a distant cottage window—and the voices of children returning homewards—and

the song of a bird, now and then—and the falling stars looping up the damasked curtains of the night—came around me, and lulled me in Anne's arms, till I seemed to be in an enchanted land.

"Tell me about Ellen Percy," said Anne, at length breaking the silence.

But I made no answer.

"Tell me about Captain Lofty and Ellen Percy," she said, again breaking the silence.

Her words startled me, and I half rose from the heaving bosom on which my cheek was pillowed; but the full, white arms held me fast, and I was obliged to speak. I remembered that Ellen and the captain had surprised me at Portsmouth, by greeting each other as old acquaintances; at first reserved, then familiar, then reserved again. On expressing surprise at this seeming intimacy, my young guardian observed—"All I know of Captain Lofty is, that I have met him sometimes in society."

I told Anne this, and then was silent again,

watching, with half-opened eyes, the strange swirls of light and shade which the moonlight, falling through the windows, threw upon the walls.

"But I want you to paint me a word-picture of them talking together at Portsmouth," said the inexorable Anne.

So I told her that, after arranging myself in my uniform, for the first time, I had hurried off to gain Ellen's approbation, and had reached the door of her room, when I heard a man's voice saying—"It is unholy, Ellen!" Then she replied, in a low supplicating voice, and so broken by sobs that I could not make out what she said. Then the man's voice answered again—"I swear to you, Ellen, to love him as long as I love you; when I am harsh to him in thought, or word, or deed, you may know that my heart is changed." I now entered the room, and Ellen introduced me to Captain Lofty; but this moment, to which I had looked forward with so much anxiety, was wholly filled, for me, with one

sweet familiar face. I had never seen Ellen look so much a woman as she looked at this moment. All the woman of her nature glowed in her countenance, with a tearful, but triumphant grace. But she seemed watching, as though she expected some attack; and only when she saw me, did she seem to feel secure.

"Will that do, Anne?" I said, closing my eyes again, and yielding to the sweet slumbrous silence.

The next morning I awoke and found myself in a strange room, which a few moments convinced me must be Anne's and Bessie's dressing-room; I jumped off the sofa on which I was lying, and listened. The coast was clear, and so, making as elaborate a toilet as I could under the circumstances, I descended, quite at ease in the supposition that I had been asleep when Captain Lofty, who I knew was to pass the evening at the Bower, had left; and that he had kindly forborne to disturb me. The two fairies blushed and laughed and fluttered a good deal, when I

scolded them for their treachery; and I was in a state of perfect happiness, when the papa came in with a countenance as long as himself, and having in his hand a letter superscribed—'Horatio Howard Brenton.'

"Who gave you that name, sir?"

All were struck nearly as dumb as myself.

"Well, I suppose you know without my repeating"—(for they had never heard me called by any other name than Howard).

"Indeed, we do not. It seems you are cared for, at all events, by Lord St. Vincent. I knew your parents well, but not the Howards. But I have a letter from your sister, entreating me to make you write. And now, my good boy, eat your breakfast and ride off to your captain. He is not to be trifled with. There is the pony, there the gate, and you can find your way *in* as well as out. You may tell your captain, from me, for I am a party to it, that we made him go home without you, because the mischievous girls would have

it you were tired and exhausted, and would not allow of our waking you."

"Oh, oh," thought I to myself, "here is scrape No. 1! These mischievous fairies, how little do they calculate on the results of their foolish pranks!" I felt quite secure, however, of nothing serious resulting, if the captain only afforded me fair play. But it was too dangerous an experiment to insinuate that anyone had deceived him. He might discover it, but his middy must not let him suspect that he knew of, much more disclosed, such a fact.

After breakfast, getting up very seriously, I observed—"Will you promise me never to let the captain know that you have disclosed this deceit to me. It may ruin my prospects. I have no fear to speak plainly to him, but I never descend to beg that which I cannot demand as my due. My captain is a complete gentleman, and, as such, is a most dangerous man to trifle with."

When I reached him, he refused to see me.

Well, I had no right to intrude. I inquired if I was to go on board.

"Wait for orders," was the answer by the coxswain.

I waited in the library of the house he occupied, the family being in the country He had written his orders, sealed them, directed them to the first-lieutenant, and I was, I feared, 'doomed.' Fortunately, his professional pride stepped in; I was his officer; I must take his orders. He walked into the library.

"Mr. Howard Brenton," fell like a death knell on my senses. I looked him steadily, openly, fearlessly, yet, possibly, imploringly, gaze for gaze; he quailed.

"There, sir, are letters from your much esteemed family. You can go on board, read them, and ask if you deserve one half the kindness they, doubtless, contain."

I was unmoved. He was moved.

"Can you, sir, venture thus to brave my look after your conduct last night—inebriated!"

I heard no more. Better he had shot me. When I did recover, I repulsed him! I loathed him! He stood silent, undecided. I was literally deranged. He brought me water; I could not taste. He said, at length:—

"Now, sir, your turn is come; I will await your pleasure. Will you explain, sir?"

"I have nothing to explain, sir; I will answer any questions it may be your pleasure to propose."

"What caused your absence from the Bower?"

"I was not absent, sir."

"Where were you?"

"I was asleep on the sofa, in an adjoining room—I did not awake until the servants were stirring. They informed me that you left me there, and that you asked the ladies to take care of me."

"That, sir, is true?"

"I never condescend to anything but truth, sir."

"Well, I believe you, sir—I believe you.

But some one has played us both a foul trick; and, for the present, you will remain here." He was about to depart.

"May I be allowed to say one word, sir?"

"No!"—I bowed—"Well, yes! But, sir, let it be to the point."

"It shall, sir. Will you make war upon a parcel of thoughtless girls? For, as far as I know, you will find no more to meet your inquiries. More I cannot, will not, tell you."

He paced the library for two good hours, until the flag-lieutenant was announced, and informed him that the admiral had waited at home to receive him until past noon, and now desired his immediate presence. Addressing me—

"Stay here, sir." I bowed, and away he flew for cocked hat and side-arms. The flag-lieutenant asked—"What is the matter?"

"Nothing, yet—I wait until he returns, by order.

At four o'clock, the captain returned, dreadfully shaken. I felt deeply for him.

"Howard, go and dine at the admiral's—I am too unwell. On your return to the ship, you will call here."

All was gloom at the admiral's. The dinner came and passed—the ladies were all quiet. Anne had evidently been crying bitterly, and showed, in her least movement, a deep solicitude and affection for her sister Bessie. The latter was very cold and silent. Fitzjames was dining with us, and sat next her. He laid aside his haughty, indifferent, assuming manner, and threw the whole energy of his character into a glowing tenderness, which it was scarcely possible for human heart to resist. The pale cheek smiled with colour again, the cold eye grew rich with light, and Bessie was suddenly among us, like a pleasant evening after a dreary day. Then, Fitzjames changed his manner, and said—"Ah! Horatio! these girls have been flirting with Captain Lofty all day; but I am afraid you remind him too much of some one at home." Then Bessie grew cold and pale again.

Not having yet read my letters, I made an excuse to see how the captain was, and retired early.

I found him sitting writing, deeply engaged, and so absorbed in his occupation, that he did not notice my entrance.

"I have come for orders, sir."

The tremulousness of my voice seemed to vibrate fearfully on him.

He started involuntarily, exclaiming—"You here, Howard? What brings you so early from the admiral's table?"

"All seemed to be in gloom there, sir; and I wished to get on board to read my letters."

"Not read them yet? Oh, it is all my fault! Go on board, Howard!—go to sleep—and come here at the customary hour to-morrow!"

On reaching the ship, I reported my return to the commanding officer. The surgeon was present, and, perceiving something strange in my tone, followed me out of the gun-room,

and, gently seizing my arm, led me into his cabin.

"What is the matter, Howard? Have you taken anything which has disagreed with you? Have you bad news from home?"

"No; only some little misconception on the part of the captain, and your worst fears are likely to be realized. It is not my fault; it is not his. I hardly know what I say or mean; I must go to bed."

"Not before you have told me all; he wishes to see me."

"Then, sir, he will tell you all you ought to know."

"You incomprehensible little——boy!"

"Well, so I may be; but I feel very ill, and you only make me worse."

"That is but too true;—let me see your tongue"—at the same time taking my arm, and ascertaining the state of my pulse. "You must take some medicine. I have to sleep on shore, but the assistant-surgeon will attend, and you will sleep in this cabin; you

are not to be disturbed to-morrow morning before my return. Those, sir, are *my* orders; you are now on the sick report."

I was put to bed, for I shortly became powerless; fever ensued, attended with slight incoherence, and for several days I was a prisoner in the Doctor's cabin. He occupied the captain's.

I soon learned that the captain's interview with the admiral, in his excited state, had been the cause of a serious estrangement, if worse did not result. That he had told the Doctor all that had occurred, giving himself all the blame for having been weak enough to be fooled by a set of giddy girls, who had informed him I was overcome by wine, and would soon sleep it off. And when he insisted on seeing me, they had intimated that he could not be admitted into their bed-chamber.

"But, my good boy, perhaps all this, although it distresses him now beyond comprehension, may be for your mutual benefit.

He disclaims any fault with you. Says that you have risen in his estimation, and that you must part from him until this strange feeling passes away. He has, already, made the necessary arrangements for your removal into the *Centurion*, until the arrival of the *Cambrian*, where you, Lieutenant Saumarez, and Fitzjames are eventually to be placed, when her new captain joins her. And now, before you make any reply, I must further inform you, that this entirely meets with my views. You are to go to the house of Judge S——, until your health is restored. He has promised to forward your reading; and Captain Lofty will call and see you; but upon the express understanding never to discuss this unfortunate affair with anyone. It has divided him from several families, but from no one of any moral weight. He resents deceit. They have found that they have not a fool to play with."

I became the inmate of Judge S——'s residence, joined the *Centurion*, and, on reporting myself to the first-lieutenant, was informed

"that I must appear on board every Sunday, at nine o'clock, a.m., and might then return to church at half-past ten o'clock."

At that moment, I met Fitzjames. He caught me by the hand, exclaiming—"Do examine this ship; I have something to give you, and much to talk about. Do you know that you are now standing on Anson's quarter-deck?"

What possessed me, I know not, but I picked my way as if I had been in a drawing-room; for we had all heard of the extreme discipline observed in the *Centurion*, and I did not feel quite safe. However, Fitzjames seemed to read my thoughts, observing—

"Never mind, Howard; you know the devil is never so black as he is painted, and I feel here more secure than I did under our late exemplary captain."

This relieved me; and I went round, examining that most remarkable vessel; was introduced, as an honorary member, in the middy's berth; and received my freedom in a good

block cut from one of the decayed knees on the lower deck. This, eventually, became an heir-loom!

"And now, Fitzjames, come with me, and call on the Judge, for he regrets your shyness, not to call it by any harsher name. You know his son, who may become a messmate; and of the value of number one society, at Halifax, you are not ignorant."

Off we started; but poor Fitzjames, in his anxiety to redeem his character on shore, had indirectly forgotten his duty on board.

Fitzjames was just putting on his number one coat, to visit the shore, when some one sung out—

"Where are you off to, Fitzjames?"

"Shore, Hoy," joyously replied Fitzjames.

He had reached the upper deck, and just remembered that he had not then obtained permission. Down he dived, and up again, in his ordinary jacket, and, with the utmost respect, approached 'Ursa Major,' with his shaggy eyebrows.

"Will you allow me leave to go on shore, sir?"

"No, sir; you have taken it already."

"Sir, I had, in my anxiety to call on Judge S——, forgotten myself."

"I will teach you not to forget yourself in future; the cutter is alongside; go and tow the launch off."

I was glad to make my escape. Next day, Fitzjames called, and humorously told his mishap, merely in fun, never dreaming, as he afterwards said, that it would travel beyond that house. I do not *know* that it did. But I never met Ursa Major at any table, on shore, from that day.

Fitzjames became a constant visitor at Judge S——'s, and my companion. He generally managed to read two hours daily with me; and, wherever I was invited, a little billet was slyly enclosed for him. His captain, moreover, had issued his commands, that, as he was the admiral's 'disposable' officer, he was not to be needlessly interfered

with. Literally, he ceased duty—Ursa Major would have 'all or none.'

But, to return to my letters. They had been read over and over again, and I had dreamed of every imaginable reply, but could not screw my courage to the sticking point.

I wished much to see my old captain; but, somehow, I felt unwilling to see him until I had written my letters, and unable to write them until I had seen him. However, I happened to see his coxswain at the door of his house one day, and asked after his health.

"I am so glad, sir—the captain told me, if you ever asked, I was to let him know, and detain you."

Here was a quiet rebuke—but I felt it very keenly, for it was merited.

I went into the hall, where the old bargemen were glad to welcome me as if I came to re-join; and there, for the first time, I witnessed the extreme cleanliness of these men, and the extraordinary trouble their companions are accustomed to pay to combing,

smoothing, and binding up, with broad black ribbon, their queue—leaving the full glossy curl of four inches, at its extreme point, just below the jacket. Several had ringlets on the forehead and ears, but these were not approved.

And here I cannot help remarking the different appearance presented by the soldiers of this period. The Sunday previous, I sat behind a row of them in church—hogs in armour. I scarcely believe the hair was real. The glossy black-leathern queue was capped with a large cockade of the same material—similar, in length and shape, to the pipe, or delivery spout, of a garden engine. The hair strained back, and plastered with pomatum and flour, or starch, until it afforded the impression that the visual organs must be distorted. In May, there was not unfrequently an exuberance of pomatum, which did not flow inside. At the extremity, a small white curl—but that belonged to some quadruped. Fancy this head out of church, surmounted by one of the caps

of the Fusilier Guards, and draw your conclusion, which of the animals had the genuine tail!

Our service did not lose them for many years after. But the *species* went out with the *tail.* Were they Samsonized? How is it that Marryat and Glascock, Hall, &c., have not treated us with a volume on this important feature of our former naval greatness?

On the return of the coxswain, he informed me that the captain had been engaged on service matters with Mr. Noble, and was now at liberty.

I was ushered in—and was about to apologize for my inattention, when his finger to his lip signalled 'No more of that!' And I blushed for what I had been about to say—for I knew well enough that we never could cease to be too good friends, to need the intervention of any ceremonious formalities in our conversation.

"Now, young fellow, I hope you are not idling your time on shore. I have been too

unwell to move out; but, pray tell the good Judge, his will be the first visit I have to repay. I have just given Noble a hint that, until your future captain arrives, you are still under my guardianship; and that he must contrive to keep up your seamanship. He will attend to it."

He then asked with some anxiety about each member of my family; I had a message from each to him. One only excepted, Ellen had sent none! she informed me, incidentally, that she knew all his family, and there was some doubt whether he would not succeed to the peerage.

I told him this, and as I ceased he observed with ill-concealed disappointment—"And that noble creature—that second mother to you, had *she* forgotten that she entrusted you to my care? Why has Ellen Percy, (dwelling on each name,) forgotten the unknown Captain Lofty?"

I found I had a delicate question to answer.

"All I can say, sir, is—I do not believe

you are so entirely unknown to her. She says she knew your family."

This was very abruptly cut short.

"Howard! I promised your sister that I would see that you wrote to her. Now, as the last command, or entreaty, go home, write to your sister and the others of the family, and I will enclose them in mine in the Admiralty bag; take time, I will call for them when I return the visit to the Judge."

I could not catch a glance at his countenance. I bid him good-morning and hoped soon to see him recovered. He bowed, saying, "Thank you," and I withdrew.

Here was a new spring discovered. It was clear to my young mind, these two understood each other! And, yet I never saw them speak—never witnessed her ask for his interest in my behalf; and I now began to wonder more than ever, at the intimacy, which, I day by day more clearly discovered to have existed between my family and Captain Lofty. And this is not the only instance which convinces

me that the time which a child passes away from home, can never be atoned for to him by the most constant correspondence, or the preservation in all its integrity of the family affection towards him. I never pass a year, even now, old as I am, without finding new traces of the effect of the period which I passed away from home, during my youth.

CHAPTER V.

On my return to the Judge, he was in high spirits; indeed, all the judges here seem to be over-grown boys, up to mischief, and generally the leaders!

A party had been formed for an excursion or pic-nic, up the basin to Miller's Island, to catch our own fish, to cook it ourselves, in fact, to become Indians for the day. Everyone was to equip himself in his worst, as fishing in salt water is not a very clean operation.

Fitzjames, young S——, and myself, were, of course, included; the admiral and captains

furnished boats, champagne, &c. The regimental band of the 98th, 29th, or some other number, I forget which, were landed, (not to fish,) and about nine o'clock a.m., the parties started, some from the town, others from different points in the basin. Our party drove to the padre-in-chief, afterwards bishop, a jolly old Nottinghamshire bird, and the best Indian, as to fishing and cooking, amongst them.

Embarking at a little cove, I forget its name now, short of Birch Cove one mile or so, we pulled off to Miller's Island, landed the *cuisine* and supernumerary provision, and then pushed out and anchored in deep water.

Now the fun commenced. The ladies, the rector, and we boys, fished. The gentlemen hauled in the lines—we frequently twitched them, when they of course came up empty. Oh, ye fair ones of Halifax! (We had no sodjers in our boat.) When the bait came up untouched, the bewitching curl of the pretty lip let out—'Bah! only an ensign nibbling.' If the fish was seen and escaped,

only a major; if a very small tom cod was hooked, only a poor middy; a haddock, a lieutenant! Presently, such a screech—'Oh! Anne, Anne! I have got a post-captain—such a fine fellow—he must be one of Nelson's!"—and in the poor fellow tumbled—such a head and shoulders!—down he went into the well; and, having been weak enough to be caught, was—as the Spanish girls say —'*papel chemado*'—burnt paper.

And so ran the merry game, until—jokes exhausted—we pulled in shore, and were filled with haughtiness of heart at finding we had caught the only fish fit to cook—three very fine post-captains, and a dozen haddocks —taken by *the three, par excellence,* beautiful young maidens.

But how were they cooked? Therein lies a secret. Does Mrs. G. give the recipe for a dish called Chowder? If not, here goes. The heads are boiled a long time, until the gelatinous parts come away—then, the head bones are removed; stew again; add a suffi-

cient number of bottles of the best claret. This is the gravy; spice, &c. Into this, ship's salt pork, previously boiled, is cut up into square bits; and good sea biscuit—some powdered for thickening—is added. Then, slices of drained cod, half-boiled in another vessel, are turned in, and all gently boiled. Slices of cod and haddock are fried, as well as broiled, as another course.

Our padre-in-chief had been wise enough, as we had no chance of catching and cooking lobsters, to provide a hamper of these, which, being rather out of our element, were turned over to a certain major—who, aided by his staff, produced certain salads not to be despised even by the blue-jackets.

I omit, amongst the highest ranks, to name the leading cooks. Sam Slick might. I do not tell tales out of school.

Fancy fairs in England! Creep under the hedges; hide your diminished heads! Whenever mention is made, or remembrance indulged in, of those glorious pic-nics at Halifax!

And who, amongst all those who enjoyed them, was in so enviable a position for doing so as the midshipman? At an age, when the sap of life begins to flow, and the heart learns how to throb, he is yet so young, that there is no woman so fair and young that she may not bestow upon him unchecked caresses, whilst he, nevertheless, holds such a position in the eyes of the world, that he is no intruder in the society of men of mark. His lips are delicate as a girl's, and yet are in the habit of uttering commands which scores of powerful men must obey; his heart is still the heart of a child, and yet it often beats high in the atmosphere of danger, to the call of duty, to the hope of glory. And, with all this, he still possesses a privilege which I never failed to use and enjoy—the privilege of being, amongst simple children, a simple child.

Bessie, and Anne, and Fitzjames, and young S., and I, with some others, were in the same boat. Amongst these latter, there was a Rosa, only fourteen, but more like a woman in

figure than English girls had taught me to expect in fourteen years of age. Some unskilful handling of a sail had thrown her into my arms at the commencement of our little voyage, and, thinking it was Anne, I had held her there for a moment. I only found out my mistake by seeing the slip of white smooth neck, that was visible between the dark hair and the rich shawl, turn to a coral blush. I released my prisoner, without taking any notice of her; and, for the next half hour, I assumed a boisterous seamen-like air; if there had been no ladies present, I think the same state of mind would have induced me to swear. But gradually the awkward feeling left me, and it suddenly entered my mind that there could be no particular harm in asking Rosa if I could help her in her fishing, which did not seem, as yet, to have been very successful. And, oh! the purple eyes which thanked me, filled with that sweet womanly-girlish manner, which strangely and unaccountably ceased to exist on the face of the earth when I ceased to

be young. Bessie and Fitzjames were seated within view, and showed me how to make love. Anne had previously taught me how to flirt. I had to determine whether I would copy the pattern before me, or put into practice the lessons I too well remembered.

The sun was set in the horizon like a ruby seal in a ring of gold, when we turned homewards. There was wind enough to keep the sails full, but calm enough to set the oarsmen throwing up the green and golden sea, through which we glided, into silver spray. The evening had an atmosphere like that of an eastern clime; sometimes, when we rested on our oars for a few moments, a shining fly would suddenly alight on the broad, outstretched blade, and a little fish as suddenly leap from the water to make it its prey; sometimes the sound of bells, sometimes the scent of new made hay, came over to us from this side and from that. And, all this time, Fitzjames made love to Bessie; and Rosa and I——?

And now to the banquet, which might fairly be termed—'The chowder feast,' (when compared with the far more insipid white-bait of Greenwich). Cloth and planks there were, but no seats, and the less description of our arrangements, the better. All were seated, and the fun began, and continued beyond the feeble powers of my old goose pinion to describe.

Hearts were lost, re-captured, and similar games to those which had been played with the slippery animals below water, were repeated, until 'all was (in many cases) as all had never been.' But the acquaintance under the influence of champagne had only now commenced.

The company had to be pulled home, and these ladies do so like to be 'pulled about' by sailors. Songs which betrayed more than prayers ever did, succeeded; and, at length, the party was scattered—what for? To replace scattered tresses, to put on the shoes that had all the time been concealed in their pockets; and, to prepare to meet at some pre-concerted rendezvous to spend the evening.

Other relief bands were in attendance. Birch Cove happened to be the rendezvous. The boats' crews had their fun with their friends in the barn at the Cove, and dancing was maintained up to daylight; captains, officers, and middies, &c., footing it in every available room, until breakfast the ensuing morning.

We retired to the sober rectory.

But how many of that immense assemblage of the *élite* of both services now exist? Sam Slick had not then, probably, got out of his leading-strings. There are some few who were there, whom I know to be alive. They never can forget that day, if they wished. It was one never to be obliterated from the memory of days of enjoyment; pure, unadulterated, honest enjoyment!

Thus much, then, for the well-earned title, which Halifax in those days (before the last American war) acquired for itself, by its genial hospitality, and high-toned society, modelled, as I was informed, by His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, the parent of our gracious

Queen. Many hearts yet at Halifax, will beat responsive to these observations, and exclaim, "Who the devil can he be? Basil Hall has ceased to be! Surely, he does not possess his letters! And Marryat collected much, but he has gone."

Go to old Wright's, search the books of the *Centaur*, *Centurion*, *Cambrian*, *Cleopatra*—all the C's—and you will find my name as it was. Some friends will now know me?

But my letters home—I wrote several, and I will state to whom, for they had some influence on my after life.

No. 1. To my mother.

„ 2. Ellen.

„ 3. My schoolmaster.

„ 4. To my sister.

The first three are secret, although all would probably be read by the good Rector. But that to my sister belongs to all those who take the trouble to read these pages.

"My dearest Charlotte,

"This is my first effort, and to my lately-

found sister! It is, must be, my fault that I did not seek you sooner. This I will not wait to consider. I intend this to be a very short letter—first, I am not up to writing, and next, because I have commenced my rough journal, of which you are made the *custos*, and of which, if you should marry without my consent, I shall disinherit you. It is a faithful and true *genuine* (as I am here in half Yankeedom) indication of events, names only omitted.

"You, and some others, will be very anxious to know how I stood the test of our captain's scale of officerdom. Well, he tells me he will write. But you promised to keep all my secrets! Am I not a tantalizing, vexatious brother? Do slap my face. Oh! how gladly I would 'turn the other also.'

"I have no secrets yet to reveal. We part; yes, to meet again—not in anger, but until we can properly understand each other. I never can sail with him until I am a lieutenant. What this implies pages would not elucidate; nor can any one out of his ship comprehend.

"There is only one '*his ship*' in the service! Yes, there *is* another, Lord C——'s. But God help the enemy, of equal force, that drops alongside of the present *Cleopatra!* There are no vaunting heroes — none that glory in braving authority—none that have characters known only to themselves! No ropes of sand. But one head whom all respect as superior in mind—not in epaulettes, for he hates them; one moral force, not to be controlled, but to which all bow with cheerfulness, as fit to command. Orders are nearly unnecessary, but I have seen enough to know that fools only leave that trap, into which fools may lead them.

"The duty—not noise—of the ship is apparently carried on by the mainspring and pendulum, like your mantel-piece dial—captain and first-lieutenant acting in concert. When your services are required, there will be no mistake.

"Now, virtually, I quit the ship because no boys should serve in her. I feel out of

my place, in the way. But the captain promises that I may re-join, whenever I feel that I can do so consistently with our relative positions.

"You cannot imagine how this being is feared, hated, loved, and respected—even adored! Does not this puzzle your poor little brain? Yet such is the truth—and I could adduce a male biped, of *assumed* good understanding, in whom to identify each passion from the admiral to a lieutenant.

"But knowing him, as I do, hearing all, and taking the truth as you perceive it 'booked,' you will learn that there are gradations in ability, honour, and morality—and that he is but the scale of the '*homometer*'—and the eyes that read this scale are just in the ratio of their own virtue. Who else could lead? Any tyrant can drive!

"And, now, to other subjects. I have led the life of Telamachus here, not unprovided with Mentors. As to heart, no one brings that safe from Halifax.

" ' Who is that smart young midshipman there,
With coral lips and auburn hair ?'

"His heart has been surreptitiously abstracted from his lips when asleep. I know not where, or how, or when. If it should reach you, pray do keep it safe—for, here, it would not last another month—another month! I shall be ruined! Oh, how I long to get to sea again!

"But I have said too much. Kiss every one for me. But who will kiss poor Louisa? She will not care for any kisses, but mine. She must kiss you, and you must personate me. 'God bless you all!' the good doctor said—and so ends

"Your very dear brother,

"H. H. B.

"P.S.—Have I not done well, for the first time? The captain has called—*Cambrian* arrived—*Cleopatra* goes home, and you will hear all from him. I will be cruel—not a word more will I write, or withdraw what I have written."

Shortly after breakfast, Captain Lofty called on the Judge—had a long interview with him, and then came up to us boys, in unwonted spirits.

"Well, my lads, there she is!—look out of the window. Is she not a noble ship?"

"Yes, sir," I replied; "but will she do what the *Cleopatra* can?"

"That, my boy, is the chance of her commander. I would most willingly take her, with every defect, and *try*. Never, my good boy, forget that word; write it in the crown of your hat—mark your linen with it. Before you commence a letter, write it on a spare strip of paper, and let it be your beacon; let it be found impressed on your brain, if you die—and every difficulty must vanish before it. It is more perfectly expressed—'Faint heart never won virtuous woman;'—for no woman of virtue could understand a faint heart, and, *par consequence*, never could be wooed.

"But what book is this that you have

here? What a book-worm you must be! I never saw such a mass of quotations and marks for passages. Let me see.

"'A righteous man hateth *lying;* but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.' 'He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly; and a man of wicked devices is hated.' 'Wisdom is the principal thing; *therefore*, get wisdom, and, with all thy getting, get understanding.' 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.'"

He dropped the book; as he raised it again, his eye fell on the fly-leaf—he closed it abruptly, handed it to me, and enquired—

"And do you ever read those extracts?"

"Oh, yes—daily."

"It was my intention to enquire who directed these studies; but, as my eye involuntarily caught the name of your kind champion, I am not at all doubtful of the pursuits which occupy you, and I hope you do not think I

have been intrusive. Nothing, believe me, but your welfare, could have induced me to interfere."

He evidently was surprised. I was not.

I lost no time in replying—that it was impossible for him to suspect, for an instant, or to imagine, that I was not very proud of the interest which he felt in my welfare, for I had no claim.

"Well, I shall go and arrange about your joining the *Cambrian*, and will then introduce you to the captain."

At dinner, I first heard the name of our new captain—Captain Norton Hearty, described as a very kind, good man; but the *Cambrian* was not a vessel in which I was likely to pick up much professional knowledge. This was indeed a disappointment, which I resolved on discussing with our worthy doctor, before he sailed. He had foreseen this, and I was to be transferred, I found, if that ship was detained any length of time in port, to more active vessels. Here, however, at Halifax,

a very contrary opinion seemed to prevail; and the great object to attain, was schooling and rank—rendering the officer, when he obtained his command, just fit to lose her in the 'most honourably acquitted' manner, and to slide into another.

Next day, Captain Lofty called—looking very blank. He seated himself by me, and commenced—

"I thought I had settled everything for your interests; but I learn that I was mistaken, and I perfectly agree with *you* that I erred."

"But, *sir*, I beg your pardon."

"Howard, I would not have sent you out of my ship, if I thought that you had been such a reasoning little body. I dislike anything second-hand. Tell me your wishes, short of re-joining me, at present, and I will endeavour to meet them."

"Sir, you have said enough to make me comprehend that you have learned of my anxiety for a more active life, than the very

youngster of youngsters in the *Cambrian* is likely to experience. Anywhere but in this idleness."

"Will you object to the West Indies?"

This was put with anxiety and a most searching gaze.

"Certainly not, sir; I should prefer any change, and the more frequent the more agreeable. I have no dislike to Halifax, but I never should become a man here."

For the first time in my life did I ever see Captain Lofty laugh outright; he even gave a kind of whistle; and, patting me on the shoulder, left me, saying—

"You will very soon be on the move—pack up—be ready."

The good lady of the house coming in, I told her that I should not, in all probability, join the *Cambrian.*

"Nonsense!" screamed she. "We will not let you go. Judge!—here! Come and settle Howard's business!"

In he bustled—

"What, what—going—where?"

"Wherever I may be ordered. Captain Lofty told me to keep everything packed-up, ready for a moment's start."

"Well, right, right—all right, my dear. You know how these captains are flitted off—boys must go, too. Always glad when you come back; you know your nest, now; no one else will keep it warm. Plenty of time to think, yet. Talk more to you this evening."

Off they went, arm-in-arm.

And upstairs I went—packed, and was—in my own mind—outside the harbour already.

I found, after all, that it was to be my lot to join the *Cambrian*, which was to sail immediately.

To say 'good night,' when you know that, in the morning, you must say 'good bye,' thrills the heart. I described to Rosa, on that last evening, the sensation of arriving off a fertile coast, after a long sea-voyage; how the scent of the field-flowers, that is scarcely

perceptible amongst the fields themselves, comes out to sea, for miles, like a welcome; and how the rich odour of the fir woods envelopes the vessel as with a charmed mantle; and how the neat, two-storied, wooden buildings, painted white, with green shutters, and verandahs overgrown with roses, become visible amongst grassy gorges and maple-fringed uplands; and how the hope begins to thrill in the young sailor's heart that amongst them may be ——

"What?" said Rosa. But it was in a low tone, and she blushed.

The next morning, little wind-puffs of rain dashed into the faces of Fitzjames and myself, as we set off to bid farewell to Anne and Bessie. As we caught views of the distant country, we could see the rolling masses of maples and beeches yielding to the wind. As we reached the garden-gate, I felt a palpitating fear at my heart that there would be a scene; but I was, nevertheless, very much disappointed when I found that we

fell into an ordinary conversation, and made no allusion to our departure. I sat by the window, and a little spaniel on the lawn barked a furious welcome at me. I threw my cap at him, and went out to fetch it.

"When he is gone, she will throw herself down and weep for days and days; and then gradually become calm, and be too sick at heart to care for anything any more."

I looked up. Anne was standing by my side. Bessie and Fitzjames were coming towards us.

"It is time to go, Howard!"

We shook hands, and Anne said—

"Give my love to Ellen, when you see her."

"And to whom can I send my love?" said Bessie.

"To Charlotte," I replied, half involuntarily, and half laughing, and looking at Fitzjames.

He started, and coloured — and his lips seemed about to say something to Bessie, which they never did say.

And so with the most affecting leave of all my good friends, and much wholesome advice from the captain of the *Cleopatra*, and tender adieux to all, we sailed from Halifax; making, as we imagined, for the West Indies.

Of our new officers, I can say but little; I found that I had no idle time, as I had contemplated, and set myself diligently to learn my profession. We had several youngsters of my own age, and I was once more, by particular request, placed in the watch of Lieutenant Saumarez.

CHAPTER VI.

We arrived off New York, and returned to Halifax, when I was removed with Saumarez and Fitzjames into the *Bellona*, a seventy-four, with a fine, jolly old Scotchman for our commander. He was very fond of me, petted me much, and introduced me, as I wickedly kept him in ignorance, into several families where I was better known than himself. He used to threaten to flog me, and once or twice I thought he would take it into his head to see how I liked it. I did not feel quite easy. But all the officers were good seamen and very happy ;

and Captain D. had the character of being quite up to his duty. We knocked about that coast for nearly two years, before which, one night when we expected to be in action, I was suddenly rated on my completing two years; it must, therefore, have been about the 4th of March, 1808.

It was after that event with the *Leopard* and *Chesapeake*, which turned out so unfortunately for Captain H. As far as my memory serves, we were at anchor in company with that beautiful frigate, the *Melampus*, in Lynnhaven Bay; when the *Leopard* anchored below, and sent her boat up to Captain D.;—he instantly perceived, as he stated, the illegality of the order; there being no declaration of war, and being of a very determined and decided character, observed—"There is no one better qualified to understand the Admiral's intentions, and to carry them into effect, than his own captain,"—and as the *Chesapeake* passed down, I understand, notwithstanding that Mr. James makes the

signal 'reconnoitre'—that it was, "Carry Admiral's orders into effect, on bearing indicated." This, I have heard the Admiral at a later day assert to be fact. At that period, the signal books were not to be approached by the youngsters. And, at one time, I was threatened with flogging for having copied some evolutionary signals into my watch bill.

Poor Captain H. did his duty well; went home expecting nothing less than the approbation of his Sovereign and knighthood; but alas! was superseded from his ship, and not allowed an interview with the first-lord; indeed, virtually disgraced until lifted out of the mire, and knighted during the reign of King William IV.

The admiral himself, Sir G. Berkeley, was removed to Lisbon to pacify the feelings of the Americans.

I had now grown considerably, and was deemed sufficiently trustworthy to have charge of a watch in harbour. But an order arrived

to transfer me to the flag-ship at Halifax, and thence to England to re-join my old captain; but the *Bellona* carried me home and left me on board the guard-ship at Portsmouth, to which I found my old friend, Dr. Howard belonged. He was very averse to my remaining on shore at all, or even going home, the reason of which I was unable to fathom. However, he promised to give me the earliest intimation of any chance of joining Captain Lofty, or now, Captain Noble, both of whom were anxious to receive me. By the wish of the good doctor the admiral not only gave me full leave, but insisted on both of us dining with him.

At his table I met many distinguished officers, and, by some machinery or other, all, when they learned that I was selected by Captains Lofty and Noble, spoke of them as very first-rate men, and said that until I joined them, or for good, they would be glad to have me with them. Perhaps, my good Captain I. E. D., of the *Bellona*, had been telling tales, for I overheard one say, that—"I was going

to cut my throat by joining Captain Lofty, and would go up one side and down the other." Others did not agree with him in this opinion. One said, "Yes, but he is as likely to join Noble." "Well—well, there he would do right."

The doctor, as I have said, had declared his objection to my going home, and I had asserted my full compliance with his wish; but from that moment we found ourselves engaged in a curious game of hide-and-seek, in which each of us was perpetually finding out the other. I thought I would amuse myself by packing up one of my trunks, and, just as I was in the midst of it, the doctor brought in some things I had left in his cabin, and which were very necessary to its completion; I thought, as I strolled through the town, that it would be amusing to enquire respecting the times of the starting of the coach, and, as I entered the office, there I found the doctor taking two places.

Home I went; such a home, such a reception! It was near Christmas, 1809.

It was quite unexpected as I entered the Rectory, about noon. Fortunately, all were out but the Rector, some business had detained him. He was taken aback, and almost dropped as he attempted to embrace me.

He was not above fifty, yet his feelings overpowered him, and he withdrew me into his study until he could prepare the other members of the family to meet me, one at a time. But, as he went out to seek my mother, Ellen caught a glimpse of a strange hat in the hall, and, with her customary quickness looked into its depth. *Try*—in large letters made her shriek, and, like an eagle, she pierced every corner for the owner, when she caught me with the study-door ajar, waiting for the next movement. She grasped me convulsively in her arms, like a feather, and fell back nearly senseless on the sofa, still keeping me firmly in her grasp, till, scanning my outlines, she seemed to think I grew larger; and, her modesty rising with her perception of my increased manliness, she gradually drew off at

last, exclaiming—"Horatio, you are no longer a child; but what a wicked boy you are—all this time among the blacks, and yellow fever in the West Indies and not a line!"

It was vain to say I had not been there.

"Keep it all until you can make a clean breast—for you will be severely tried, to-night, I can tell you, and, perhaps, sent back to your ship. But such a tiresome creature to come back—such a big boy! Well, I will give you the last kiss you will be entitled to, as a boy; for, I am sure, no one will suffer it again."

That was indeed her last, for reasons then unexplained. I guessed, but not quite right.

"But," I observed, "how came my hat to cause you to shriek?"

One piercing glance told all—she coloured. I took her hand, and said—

"Your secret is safe with me. I will never offend you."

Drawing herself up in all her majesty—for I never saw her look so magnificently com-

manding—at the same time taking my hand in hers, she addressed me thus :—

"Horatio! I fully comprehend your meaning, I am the same single-hearted Ellen Percy you left behind. You are my adopted son, and when I dream—or, rather entertain the thought seriously (making a bow) of changing my condition, your permission for that change will be asked; for the condition still will exist, as already registered—that you, as my adopted son, inherit my estates.

"Now, sir, you have your secret to keep—mind you do so; and as a motherly or elder sister treat your ever affectionate Ellen."

She had gradually decreased, like the beautiful snake, into her former coil, and was very much overcome. At this moment, in rushed my sister Charlotte, and swallowed me almost.

"Will you never stop kissing me? Do let me breathe one moment!"

"No, no; I intend to smother you entirely, you wicked—wicked creature!"

I was not quite sure she would not—for

she had grown such an immense girl, or rather woman. At last, she became exhausted; and, just letting my face out under her right arm—for her whole body had fallen across me, pressing me to the sofa—I saw that Ellen had fainted!

I rang the bell for water. Charlotte, no less frightened than myself, used every endeavour to restore her. Wetting a clean handkerchief I found on the table with water, and bruising the smelling-salts on it, I touched the tongue and lips several times, when she opened her eyes, stared wildly, and asked where she was—exhibiting a most fearful timidity, or apparently excited modesty, as if she were not dressed. I instantly threw a heavy shawl round her; she waved her hand to thank me, and the maids and Charlotte carried her off. But I was not to have any respite. Worse than all, was poor Louisa Hardy; she hugged, cried, raved, kissed; and her poor father cried quite as much, wringing his hands, exclaiming—

"Oh! I hope this will be over before mis-

tress comes. Only think—in the drawing-room, too! Do, Mr. Horatio, pray make her let go!"

She did, but she had fainted, and was also carried off—leaving me little better. I had barely time to retreat and lock myself in the library, taking my hat with me, when the rest of the family returned.

There was a long silence; something mysterious going on—but I dared not move. At length, the Rector came in and informed me, he did not think my mother could stand the shock. They must put her to bed, and gradually inform her that I had not been to the West Indies, nor attacked by fever, and that I was hourly expected home.

These matters may be tedious, but those who dip into family scenes must expect them; at least, when hearts are in their right places. But, in the temporary absence of my mother, the Rector's lady received me as a mother, with deep feeling; and the poor little girl, Fanny—now a bouncer, but of

beautiful proportion—looked steadily at me, measured me deliberately, then looked at her father, then at her mother, and with one bound, like another snake, she clung convulsively to me. But she soon recovered herself, rushed out of the room, and shut herself up, ashamed, I suppose, in her chamber.

It was now time to prepare for dinner, or to wash off some of our salt-water, which had sprayed us all as though we had sailed to Spithead, against a sharp sea. My hair, shirt-collar, &c., were rather out of genteel costume, and, perhaps, I required more attention than any of the party. But it was long before all were assembled, and, possibly, each much more studiously neat, than before or after, for some weeks. But little dinner was eaten; the great consumption was of handkerchiefs. We soon retired into the drawing-room, where some kind, thoughtful soul, said to be Louisa, had made her own arrangements for our passing the evening on three sofas enclosing the fire. Ellen on my right; Charlotte, left; Mrs.

Howard and Fanny on the right sofa, and the Rector on the left, with the seat for my mother reserved.

It was long before our silence was broken. Eyes and ears were painfully at work, and many visits took place to the chamber of my mother. At length, the Rector was sent for, and he returned, beckoning me. I followed, and, on reaching the bed-side of my mother, she quietly said:—"How foolish! to think I was so weak!" kissed me fervently, and said, "Sit down; pray leave us alone!—a mother's feelings are sacred." This I did not like; I had my fears, and as I got up to see the door closed after the Rector, I whispered—"Be at hand, with aid." On my being re-seated, she observed—"How brown you are!" I touched her hand; she recoiled, and said—"I must not touch you; they tell me you have yellow-fever. Now tell me all about it; can I be infected here? I soon saw that by degrees I might humour the questions so as, eventually, without pain or pressure to the senses, to

remove predisposing tendency to incoherency. But it would require a long interview. I made up my mind to it, and began.

"But you know as well as I do, my dear mother, that when the disease has once passed off, it never recurs in another climate."

"Ah," she observed, "no one ever told me that!"

"But," I observed, "you must, as a mother, know the result of vaccination or small-pox, measles, scarlet-fever, &c."

"Oh, yes! I do, fully; I now begin to remember when you were inoculated;—let me look at your left arm. Oh, yes; there it is. Where is Charlotte?—how strange she is not here!"

"She is below; she thought your head-ache was too severe to bear too many of us together."

"Oh, my head-ache is going rapidly; I am feeling stronger; recollecting further back. Do kiss me again."

She hugged me convulsively.

"Oh, how good it is of you to come back to see us. We were told you might never return."

"Surely the good Rector never let you think so! Did he not direct your thoughts to heaven, and tell you that you had no right to repine, or imagine evils that had not yet visited you?"

"How you talk, Horatio! No one ever talks to *me* in this strain. I talk to *myself*, or think, just as you do. But I seldom discuss such matters but with *myself* in private; I thought you knew me better."

This was all very true, but I was not yet quite satisfied; but when she added—

"Oh, how anxiously I shall watch all your countenances, at breakfast, to-morrow. Why could I not have witnessed the meeting of Ellen, Charlotte, Fanny, and even poor Louisa? Did *she* kiss you, Horatio? What a jewel that woman is! never desert her while you live;—she saved your life! Well, it is better I did not witness all this joy, or I might have

sunk under it. I feel that you had better leave for the night; sleep will relieve me, and I wish to see the Rector. And now, one more embrace, and may God bless you,"

I retired, and the Rector succeeded, and gave her a composing draught, when she desired that Louisa should sleep in the room with her.

It was late when I rejoined the party below; but I had effected an object—I had re-produced natural thought and sleep—and I trusted pleasant dreams might, in nature's own mode, perform the rest. I was not disappointed.

Some few questions were answered, the evening closed with prayers, and the happy family were soon on their respective perches. I could hardly imagine I was 'to sleep in all night,' and was quite annoyed I could not hear the 'holy stones' overhead; and as I gradually sank deeper and deeper into a kind of region that was half feather-bed and half slumber, I began to balance this one day at home against the two years away, and to ask

myself whether a mariner does not, by his choice of a profession, waste the life which God has given him, and every hour of which, in its natural course, is so vivid and so varied. Is not the life of the common sailor before the mast, I said to myself, for the most part taken up with a mean kind of domestic drudgery? And is not the spirit of the officer, when even in the midst of the broadest expanse of the high seas, so checked and counterbalanced by the very nature of its duty, that it learns to act like a slave and feel like a tyrant? A feeling of deep despondency came over me, and I said aloud—"But am I, then, inextricably bound in so hateful a manner?"

"No! never by me!" said a plaintive voice by my side.

"Ellen!" I cried, and started up; but there was no one in the room; and, after gazing for a few moments at the stars, that were as thickly clustered and lustrous in the heavens as May blossoms, I lay down again and sighed myself asleep.

But the next morning all this appeared like a dream, when I was awoke and startled by the old butler (no longer Louisa opening the curtains—no kiss) and—"Your hot water is ready, sir." I felt so disappointed at being made a man before my time, that I got quite angry.

"Old gentleman?"

"Sir?"

"In future, if you please, I should prefer being called as of old, Master Horace."

"And, Mr. Horatio, if you please, sir—as you are pleased to prefer having things your way, perhaps you may allow me to have my feelings. I should infinitely prefer 'Hardy,' if you dislike my old name of Henry, to Old gentleman."

"Certainly Henry; but I think the Rector has promoted you during my absence?"

"Well, sir, perhaps he has; but, sir——"

"I must obey the last order, Henry; and, as my superior calls you Hardy, it may cause some confusion if I, only Master Horatio, took liberties."

"God bless you, sir—call me anything you please, but do not break our hearts by forgetting us."

Off he bolted. I almost vowed to be off too. I shall be quite unfit for my profession; well did Dr. Howard advise me not to go home—all this he clearly foresaw; but if he fancies my heart is to be taken before it is worth its weight of something of some known value or marketable property, he does not know Horatio Howard Brenton. So up I jumped, dressed, and found I was too late for prayers; a fault unpardonable in former days, but I suppose that I may be tolerated now. Not at all. First, Ellen commanded my presence. "How does it happen you were too late?" "I will tell you by-and-by."

I was just about to commence the round of my salutations, when, to the astonishment of all, with a firm step, my mother entered the room, embraced me, sat down on the sofa, and said—"Now, let me see each of you follow my example."

All but Ellen did, and she excused herself to my mother, whispering—"You know all about it."

We then closed round the breakfast-table, and never did I see my mother enjoy herself more; she indeed observed—

"Horatio, you have brought back my life many years. How unkind it was in you not to write; we have never heard of you since Captain Lofty came back and said he would try you for neglect when you arrived—tell us pray what this talismanic *try* means."

"It is simply—endeavour to excel; those who never try, never know what they can do; I believe it arose from a sarcastic joke of Nelson or Collingwood, to indolent officers. I take its essence to be—England expects every man to do his best; at all events to try. I have it in my hat."

Shortly after breakfast, the letters arrived. One for me, from Portsmouth, and, to my astonishment, on H.M.S. I observed—

"This is the first ominous sheet of *foolscap* that I had ever received."

I was half afraid to open it. Ellen smiled, and looked maliciously wicked. I almost suspected her of some trick.

"Why do you laugh?" I inquired; "it may turn out no laughing matter to any of us."

I was about to tear the paper and break the seal. She gently handed me the scissors, adding—

"Copenhagen—*Try*."

"You guardian angel, do not provoke me in this way, or I may disobey orders."

All the blood fled her cheeks; she was silent.

I quietly cut the envelope; within was an order to join H.M.S., *Amelia*, without delay, and the information that a passage had been ordered for me in H.M.'s brig, *Plover*. By command of, &c., J. B., Secretary.

A note from the good doctor ran thus:—

"Most private and confidential.

"DEAR HORATIO,

"Your order to join, I am authorized to in-

form you, is to desire your appearance 'within moderate time for preparation,' should the *Plover*, Captain Noble, suddenly arrive; therefore, as you know how much character depends on appearances, as well as realities, you will act accordingly. You may show this to your Ellen *only*. I hope all passed off safely. I feared, but now I fear more:

"Ever your affectionate friend,

"DANIEL HOWARD."

I closed them all, putting them into my pocket, and retired to the study, where I found the Rector, and to him I displayed the official mandate. He would have packed me off *instanter*, but that he had a letter from his brother, informing him that I knew the meaning of such commands, and, he was sure, would act prudently.

Ellen peeped in, and said—

"Did you want me?"

"No," said the Rector; "but you will advise him better than I can;—I am a man of peace."

This caused a passing cloud on her brow; but, as he left the room and closed the door, she said—

"Now, Horatio, I am prepared for the worst; for the Rector has revealed that he will not advise."

"Now that we are alone, off Copenhagen, my guardian, there are the despatches."

She read them as if she had been the commander-in-chief, and replied with assumed gravity—

"Sir, the tact you have displayed meets with my approbation; but I wish to be informed, without reserve, of your proposed movements, in order that I may adopt the necessary measures.—Will this do, Horatio? Should I be allowed epaulettes?"

"Indeed you would. But you would drive all hands mad."

Resuming her authority, she observed—

"Time, sir, is precious, and will admit of no hesitation. Is your reply to that letter written?"

"No."

"Then get a sheet of official paper, and I will aid you."

"Well, I am ready."

"SIR,

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your commands, and to inform you that they shall be obeyed with all necessary despatch:

"I am, sir——"

"What! no more—no explanation?"

"No; not one word more! Accident, causes over which you may have no control, may retard you. Explanations, in my view, are merely pegs for idle excuses. Never condescend to explanation until you deem it necessary to vindicate your conduct. Write this below, *Try*; and do not forget Copenhagen. Close that letter as methodically as you would one to your ladye-love. Often does a man's character, or a liking, depend even on his handwriting or method.

"And now, Horatio, you will be kind enough to listen to my advice, as regards you, and my determination as regards my own pleasure. This is Wednesday; you will make your preparation to quit on Monday morning, by dawn. You must pass your Sabbath here. So far I insist; I consider that note as much addressed to me as to you.—No reply until I finish.—It is necessary that you should now be informed that I hold documents, which will hereafter pass into your hands, which entitle me to provide for the expenses of your mother, sister, and yourself, and that I am joined in the trust with the Rector. This will explain to you the otherwise incomprehensibility of the expenses of this family—of my communication with Captain Lofty, and of the source of your present and future income, of which your dear mother will inform you before you depart.

"The Rector and myself will accompany you to London. There I shall provide what I think fit for your advanced age and more

matured understanding, establish your credit at our banking-house, and the necessary forms to be observed until you are old enough to judge for yourself. We then move on to Portsmouth, with the Rector, and we will remain at the Doctor's, at Gosport, where, he informs me, he has purchased property, until you sail. Foreseeing all this, the Rector has already provided his curate; and, incomprehensible as all this may appear to you, he will meet us this evening at dinner."

What could I say—what could I do? I was less happy! I replied—

"I will not, dare not, oppose you in anything. You have deprived me of freedom. All that I intended to write, you have commanded, depriving me of all credit. I cannot but feel the most intense gratitude to you for your overpowering kindness; and the latter part of your speech reveals to me my dependence, as well as your incomprehensible devotion to our family. Go one step further, and you will be more reverenced than loved!—

that will be a fatal chasm. Benefits have a limit, and independent thought must be mine."

And it was so. Whilst every day made me love Ellen better, I became more and more dissatisfied with the tie of 'guardian and ward,' which united us. It seemed to put an immeasurable distance between us. And, as though Ellen had been conscious of this feeling of mine, she seemed to become proportionately anxious to make our relative positions manifest.

"Horatio, you misconceive me. Nothing that I confer upon you belongs to *me;* I am empowered by the will of your father, to act as I do—if you would distrust *me*, then our confidence will indeed be at an end—you are free as the wind!—But it must be a gentle breeze—your canvass must depend on your means, and, until you prove yourself capable of command, you must like all under the age of twenty-one, depend on your guardians—your intellect I have watched, nursed, endeavoured to mould—it has so far advanced beyond your age, that I have thought you

might be trusted with secrets intended only to be revealed upon your attaining the age of twenty-one. At that age you will know more, and not before—then you will find out, and only then, that fortune or poverty, excepting your professional rank, has been your own making or marring; until then be patient, I entreat you, do be tractable."

"For Heaven's sake! do spare me—do forgive me; what have I said or done that you should even suspect that I could act contrary to your advice, your wishes, your commands?"

"Never, Horatio—as you value my love, my affection, use that word '*command*,' but, as I do, in sport! It is a dangerous word in the mouth of any one not possessing the most ample and responsible authority.

"And, now, a truce to further advice—there is my hand; go and make your cautious preparations, for you have much to go through before Monday—two partings will be spared you on that day—one more word—turn over in your mind the requisites for one of your age,

your gun, instruments, or other natural requirements to place you *only* upon an equality with any other gentleman's son on board—or even any useful article, for all these must be provided independent of your standing allowance—that, I am informed by Captain Lofty, depends on the custom of the captain; and, moreover, 'he does not endorse bills beyond forty pounds to any officer under his surveillance.'

"Now, seek your sister, break this intelligence of your departure in the most cautious manner. But as to all that has passed between us, inviolable secrecy—I shall go to your mother, and there I dread the effect of the re-action—I even fancy that it would lessen the shock to her if you left this as on a visit to London—and from thence make known the sudden order to join your ship; but I cannot, nor would anyone in this house, stoop to deceit. No, it cannot be—come what will—truth she must know now!"

She left the room in tears. Oh! I could have clung to her like a mother; but, with all

the love she showed towards me, there was mingled a somewhat painful reserve; and any attempt to penetrate beyond that veil, she had informed me, might cause a greater distance—"When I am free, then I may again call you my adopted child!"

I had not to wait long. Charlotte, with as much fuss as a queen-dowager or a maid-of-honour—her cheek blooming from a turn through the grounds, and rustling with furs—poked her bewitching self through the doorway, and inquired—

"Am I to be shut out of the council chamber? What! you here, and alone! Where are all the others gone? I thought a cabinet council was sitting."

"Did you? How, then, could you presume to intrude?"

"Hope I don't! But pray, Mr. Formal, will you be good enough to sit in my divan, for I have to summon you to answer for yourself to certain grave charges. Come along; you look guilty."

"Surely this place will answer!"

"No! no!—escape here is possible; but I have placed my guards to prevent it from mama's boudoir, and she has gone to pay a visit to your 'champion.' Pretty fellow, you, to have a champion! Well, we will bring you to your senses some day."

Taking me by the arm, she led me like a sheep to the slaughter, and I found myself in a room I had never before noticed. It led from the dressing-room of my mother, and was in reality the garret above the kitchen squared inside to a beautifully-proportioned rectangular *bijou* of a boudoir, panelled with light blue damask silk, festooned from the peaked roof, with pale ash and red stripes from the centre in radii, stored with every article of ease and requirement, and externally surrounded by glass, forming a conservatory with overhanging balconies. It was, indeed, a fairy prison.

"And, pray, whose design is this?" I inquired.

"Nonsense, Horatio; who can build places so near heaven, and so perfectly adapted for angels? It grew in a night, like a flower. You are on your defence here, and must ask no questions."

The great accusation against me was, that I had neglected to write home. And I at once pleaded guilty to the charge, rejoicing that in my absence from home I had taken life as I had found it, and shown no sham subserviency to feelings which, for the time, I had laid aside. I would have no pale ghosts of letters reminding me of my old life, while every day was teaching me a new one.

Fortunately, Ellen entered, dispersed the court, and released me; and my mother occupied, in a few minutes, the judicial chair; Ellen taking her seat on a stool, like a ministering angel, on her right. "A higher tribunal!" I thought to myself, as I looked on in wonder at these proceedings. My mother commenced, rigorously—

"Horatio, my beloved child, come nearer!

Ellen, please remove this table. All here have mistaken my case very much. I am weakened by failure of excitement, after a life of over anxiety; and, when the moment arrives which calls for exertion, I am found too weak for the shock. Dr. Howard understands my case well, and has promised to provide me with a suitable residence near him, on the Gosport side of the water, where I can obtain sea-bathing and the healthy air of that locality. Besides, I have no medical person here capable of acting. Ellen has communicated to me your orders to return, and you perceive it has had no effect on me—the reverse. You possess my blood, and I feel that God will sustain me, and allow me—now I have devoted you to that honourable profession — to see you return each cruize with additional honour. Yes—and hear you spoken of as a mild, discriminating, but *strict officer*. Yes—Horatio, although a woman, I have commanded a very large household, and I fully understand the cares of one whose duty

it is to command. My uncle was one of the ornaments of the Army; another of the Navy; another of the Bench. And, now, time presses. It was your grandfather's intention, that until you reached years of discretion, you should not have revealed to you your actual hopes—I may add fears, in a pecuniary point of view. But, Ellen—who must remain, under present circumstances, our great unknown, the controller of our destinies—advises me to inform you of all that I know. She holds sealed documents which will determine the nature and extent of your pecuniary fortunes—to be opened only by her, in the presence of the Rector, when you attain the age of twenty-one years, 'having borne a pure and unblemished character;' to the fact of your possessing which, her signature is indispensable before you can enter on any of the possessions therein referred to, or adopt any 'legal proceedings.' In default of her signature to such testimonial, the greater part of the property passes to your sister. I know nothing with regard to the disposal of the rest; but

you would be unworthy of my regard, if you accepted any portion of it without fulfilling strictly the intent of the devisor."

This may account for Ellen's maternal interest. Ellen had been giving an almost intense attention to my poor mother's nervous, disjointed speech; and here she suddenly interposed—

"I will tell you at once, Horatio, that the secret I possess, if divulged, might sever me from all I hold dear! But thus far I will tell you. If events should force me to be other than I am, I should dismember this whole family; but, if left to my own course, I may yet do much good before the period arrives at which I may be called upon to deliver up my trust. Mr. Deedes, the family solicitor, is coming this afternoon, and some preliminary arrangements will be made to-morrow morning. No more at present."

I now rejoined my sister in the drawing-room. She was about to resume her fun, when, catching the fallen look of my countenance, she changed her tone, and said—

"It is so very late, and so near dressing time, that I must make you take a turn in the grounds." Fanny would have joined, but she signified her wish to go alone.

Off we started, and glad I was to breathe the fresh air. I had gone through no less than four severe trials, between breakfast and four o'clock, and all, for my tender age and experience, had been very severe. I had yet one more suspense before dressing for dinner.

When Charlotte joined me, I could not help kissing her; she was so bright, so cheerful. She looked inquiringly into my eyes to fathom my distresses, and exclaimed—

"Oh, Horatio! you have some dreadful secret, I suspect, and I fear to know it, for I am afraid that I shall be too weak to hear bad news.

"What would you deem the worst news, Charlotte?"

"I cannot imagine anything so bad as your having, in some manner, committed yourself, and that *foolscap* letter, as Ellen properly

defined it, calling upon you to render some explanation. Surely not, Horatio?"

"No, my dear sister; no disgrace—fear not that. But it does curtail my leave of absence some weeks——"

"Weeks! Horatio; but we never *expected* more than *days!*"

"Well, days call it, dearest; for that is the truth."

"Then why say weeks, and lift me up to let me fall from a greater height? Oh, what a cruel, cruel, unthinking creature!"

"But no bones are broken!"

"No! but you do not know how easily the sensitive heart of woman is wounded, and, by such rude concussions, how woman's love of dependence—yes, Horatio, of dependence on the truth, firmness, fitness of her companion—is shaken, cooled, crushed even for ever! Never deal in mysterious, harassing suspense, when it can easily be avoided."

CHAPTER VII.

In every moderate-sized house, however well regulated, the expectation of company causes some little bustle and excitement. If the occupants be gentle and refined, it expresses itself in a kind of sea-shell murmur. A sort of suspicion of it meets you at the garden-gate, and you are overwhelmed with it as soon as you enter the hall-door. Now, the Rectory had been full all day of this whisper of coming guests, but I had been far too interested and occupied all day to think about it, until the arrival of that delicious hour before dinner,

which one divides pretty equally between the great red leather easy-chair which fills half the dressing-room, and the duties of the evening toilet. I then relieved the tedium of dressing with numerous guesses on the subject. "It is the lawyer," I said to myself, as I arranged an impracticable cravat. "It is the new curate," I determined, as I thrust my arms into the sleeves of a rather over-tight new coat. Charlotte brought me my cup of tea instead of Louisa, and stood before me a perfect blaze of white muslin, purple eyes, and auburn hair.

"Which of your lovers is coming to dinner, Charlotte?"

"Which of your friends have you given me to?"

"Fitzjames."

"Fitzjames is coming to dinner."

"Who! what!" I exclaimed, starting up in perfect amazement. Charlotte was delighted at having startled me out of that reserve and serenity of manner which was untrue both

to my age and disposition; and which it was one of my failings to assume. I recovered myself as soon as I could, and offered my arm with dignity—she took it with grace, and we proceeded down what—if I were writing a romance—I would call the picture-gallery; for there were portraits in it—one of a great aunt reading a folio, another of a great-great grandmama shooting with a bow and arrows, and lastly a full-length of a puffy-cheeked gentleman, whom the family claimed as some sort of a cousin, and called 'the general,' and firmly believed to have won a battle somewhere in the Low Countries. When we reached the drawing-room I threw all the light of friendship into my face and prepared to expend it on my friend; but to my utter astonishment there was no one in the room but a tall, thin, olive-tinted clergyman, whom I at once rightly supposed to be the new curate. I quietly turned to Charlotte, and asked to be introduced.

"My brother—Mr. Fitzjames," she said.

"Any relation of the Fitzjameses of——" I

began. The large thin-lipped mouth of the guest interrupted me.

"I am the brother of your friend!"

"Yes!" said the Rector, who entered at the moment—"the friendship between two midshipmen has brought about the friendship between two clergymen!" And he shook his curate heartily by the hand.

Now, so strange a thing is the human heart, that this declaration gave me rather a feeling of dissatisfaction than otherwise.

We had a pleasant little dinner-party; the lawyer, Mr. Deedes, had arrived; and we also had with us Miss Springer, an old-young-lady, of the neighbourhood, who atoned for the want of good looks and the use of spectacles, by the most perfect amiability and a knowledge of geography; she knew all about the chief towns in Prussia and Russia, and what were their populations, and how much iron and hemp they produced, or exported, or something. Her only failing was a habit she had got into of roguishly shaking her fore-finger

at me, with a species of threat, which I very much disliked.

I found myself constantly scanning Mr. Fitzjames and Mr. Deedes, who sat opposite to me, on either side of Ellen; for in the one I felt interested in tracing the resemblance to his brother, and in the other I found a specimen of a race which was quite new to me; for I had never before met with a man who made his living by being a man of the world. I appeared to be equally an object of interest to the two gentlemen, and our eyes frequently met, on which occasions Mr. Fitzjames would pass off the awkwardness by broadening out the lower part of his face into a thin smile, as though his thoughts were occupied with some old remembrance; whilst Mr. Deedes would snap me up with 'glass of wine, Howard?'

"And are you still good friends with my brother, Horatio?" said the curate, during a pause in the conversation, and so leaning slightly back in his chair, and so looking, and so speaking, as though he would give the

company to understand that all the previous proceedings at the dinner-table had been mere preliminaries, and that we had at length arrived at an important moment.

"Sir, I never knew Herbert Fitzjames do anything that would cause estrangement. He may have been deceived, but, I will answer for him, he never deceived anyone wilfully."

"Enough!" he said; "you are the *man* he has told me of;—but I find you a *boy*—I expected to find you much his senior. And yet you are that *boy* that mastered Captain Lofty!"

"I request, sir, that you will never speak in this tone of Captain Lofty, or I must think less of your brother, who is not entitled to promulgate any idle and, I must say, unfounded tales."

I retired, to join the ladies.

At length, the gentlemen came into coffee, and the room became full of that rich stillness and repose which are the glory of an English fireside. Fanny sat in the easiest of the easy chairs, and I sat on an ottoman at her feet. I was too happy to fall asleep, but I certainly

fell into that dreamy state which leaves the mind conscious of all that is passing; while, at the same time, it seems to raise it into a sphere quite removed from all those around it. It was just the proper state in which to listen to my pretty cousin's narrative of all the occurrences in the village during my absence; for, while it disposed my conscience to persuade itself that I was under no sort of obligation to make any observations in reply, it fused all the minute details into a fanciful whole. At length, she said—

"And now, my dear boy, I have got to tell you the best and the chiefest thing of all. Ellen promised me that I should be the one to tell you, even when they began to cut down the trees. You have built some schools for poor children; Ellen has lent you the money, and you will pay her when you come of age; and there is a house for a master and mistress, without encumbrance; and both house and schools are quite built, and your name is over the porch; and the first stone is to be laid to-morrow."

"Quite built, and the first stone is to be laid to-morrow! Fanny! what does it all mean?" I exclaimed, thoroughly aroused by this startling piece of intelligence, and looking from Fanny to Ellen for an explanation.

At that moment there sounded through the house a violent ringing of the gate-bell—a loud and reiterated ringing, such as could only be produced by drawing the handle to its fullest extent, and suddenly letting it go.

"Either a guest, or a message for the lawyer," said Mr. Deedes, endeavouring to reduce to the region of common-place, the involuntary consternation which had fallen upon us all.

"Either a guest, or a message for the minister," said the Rector, as he shook off, with some show of determination, the slipper which hung half-off and half-on his foot.

Immediately after the opening of the hall-door, we could hear Hardy's voice in a tone of deep and angry expostulation. Something unusual was evidently about to happen, and

our little company prepared for it. The old-young-lady started up, put her hand on Mr. Deedes' shoulder by accident, and stood erect, like a Roman virgin about to be slain in a Roman forum; Mr. Deedes crossed his legs, and assumed the air of a fashionable man of the world; the curate withdrew behind his broad, thin smile; the Rector's wife looked anxious; my mother continued dozing by the fire; Ellen remained bending over some papers in one corner of the room, and with her sweet, clear-cut face, half averted against the damask curtain, still bore the likeness of an antique cameo. But, as Hardy's voice grew louder and angrier, and the sounds of footsteps approached the drawing-room door, and another man's voice was heard in the confusion, a sudden change took place in the manner of several of our party. With a swift movement, that was more like the sweep of a pigeon's flight than anything else, Ellen flew across the room, and, cradling my mother's head in her arm, stood between her and the door.

The lawyer assumed all his business air, and the curate looked utterly astonished and disconcerted.

The door was flung open, and Hardy entered the room with a stranger, whom I instantly recognized as the tall man whom I had met in the wood path many years ago. The two men stood looking at us all, for a few moments, in silence; and the appearance of Hardy scarcely surprised me less than that of the stranger, for some strong feeling had transformed his usual humble, domestic look into a calm, firm bearing. The latter was as I had first seen him, gaunt, and pale, and squalid; with an expression which would have been fierce, had there not been the touching lines of want of food around his mouth. The man's glance slowly passed over us all, until, at length, it settled on Ellen, who increased the painfulness of the posture in which she stood, supporting my mother's head, to meet it steadily. But her whole soul seemed devoted to the care of keeping

the weary, helpless head, which lay upon her bosom, lulled in slumber. Her large eyes, in their earnest gaze, seemed to be praying for some slumbrous power. And though every hostile wish was beaming from the man's countenance, he dared not to baffle her desire; but, with a step which he endeavoured to make as insolent as possible, lounged into the chair from which the Rector had just arisen. Still, there was perfect silence throughout the room. Hardy looking like a fashionable gentleman, who had been a witness of some disturbance, and was ready frankly to give his testimony on the subject; the lawyer, like a winning chess-player, expecting his adversary's next move; the curate, as though his feelings had been hurt, and he had a right to deprecate the whole proceedings; the Rector, as though sin were under his observation, and he found it necessary to remind himself that it was not his place to judge. As for Miss Springer, she stared at me in a surprised, remonstrating

way, which said quite as plainly as words:—"Mr. Horatio! really, what does it all mean? So rude of the man to intrude in this way. Why don't you draw your dirk, or something? Really, it's quite interesting!"

"Well!" said the man, at length; and his voice had that kind of hoarseness in it which comes from hunger, exposure, and dissipation—"Well?" Now the word was addressed to no one in particular, but the tone in which it was uttered left no doubt that it called upon the whole present company to observe the disastrous results of some course of conduct, of which they, the present company, had been guilty, and of which he, the speaker, was the victim. No one answered the challenge; and—after a few moments, leaning forward with a sudden kind of convulsive jerk, resting the weight of his body on the hands which spread gaunt and helplessly over the sides of the chair, throwing back his forehead, and throwing forward his face in a manner which gave him

a wild-animal look I can never forget—he spoke again—

"What does it matter if I have been bad? I have been miserable, too! Time is going on, and I am losing my life! Think of that, old man! Yon have lived your life. You have had friends to love you, and all the incidents of life have come to you in their proper order. But for me—for me! All my days have gone by in hatred and rage! And I have been wicked!—do you know what wickedness is?"

I dare not repeat the words of that wild outcry of a despairing, weary soul. It shocked us all, and the moments of its recital seemed like years. The desolateness of great cities, to one who has wasted his life—the haunted shadows of the lonely heaths, to one who has misused his days—were brought before us in terrible distinctness. Those rapid half-frenzied syllables taught us how a man learns to crouch before the human eye, and to shrink before the very stars, and to feel that the trees are

better and braver. And how, at night, he says — "Another day gone!—another day gone!"—and is restless, restless!—learning by heart the echo that mocks his wandering footsteps from the other side of the dismal street, just when the white light of dawn begins to stand upright, like a pale ghost, in every window. And how, when the world lives and works, he only passes time with the one thought that time is passing away.

But all this utterance—it scarcely deserves any distincter name—was given in a grotesque, unnatural tone, that reminded one of third-rate acting. It is only the pure and virtuous spirit that can give fit expression to its own sorrows; and the stranger seemed at length to feel this—for, as one who has distorted his face to please a child and failed in the attempt, he withdrew with a kind of sullen shame from his gaunt, earnest manner, and resumed that mixed resemblance to a cynic and a stable-helper which seemed to be natural to him. Turning savagely to Ellen, he said—

"Will you accept my offer? This is your last chance, and my best one; this is just the kind of happy family party in which we could comfortably settle matters."

And his cold eyes glanced over all the party, seeming to have a different story for each; but, wander where they would, it was on Ellen that they rested at last, with a strange aspect of despairing malignity. And still my fair guardian held that poor slumbering head upon her breast, with an air and an attitude which seemed to show she sought protection in giving it. There was a good deal of contempt in her glance, and some pity; but the impulse in my heart, which bade me throw myself at her feet, and offer my whole life to her service, checked, for the time, my disposition to analyze every expression of the most interesting human countenance I ever met with.

"Be it so, then!" said the stranger, with sudden calmness; "act as she acted, that I may curse you as I have cursed her. In the

midst of all the sweetness of life, sigh pleasantly, now and then, over the results of your own ill-doing; and write me gentle rebuking letters, that I may some day fling them back to you, as I now do to her!"

Miss Springer screamed, and I started up; for, with his concluding words, he threw into my mother's face a packet of papers with so frantic a gesture, that he dashed into fragments a rich china jar, filled with rose-leaves, that stood near him. It was a terrible moment for all who loved the feeble frame thus suddenly startled from sleep. Even Ellen made an involuntary action of dismay.

"We regret, Philip, that we can do nothing more for you; you have wasted all your opportunities, and must now take your own course. We cannot even wish you success, until you are completely changed in heart and mind."

This was what my mother quietly said, instead of showing any of that excitement and terror which were naturally to have been

expected; but there was a kind of fixedness in her manner which pained me exceedingly, and made Charlotte turn aside in tears. It was too evident that she was repeating, scarcely consciously, some formula which had passed her lips years and years ago. It mattered little, however, what she said, for he whom she addressed was completely absorbed in gazing at some object which lay upon the floor. I followed the direction of his glance, and saw a miniature lying amongst the spilled rose-leaves. Raising his eyes, at length, apparently with a great effort, he signified to Fitzjames that he should pick the miniature up, and then slowly left the room.

"We will make no further allusion to this," said Ellen, as the hall-door closed.

It was now seen that one of the pieces of the broken china jar had inflicted a pretty severe wound on the curate's forehead. He rejected all offers of assistance, in a manner which forbade their repetition; and, opening one of the windows, stepped out, and walked

to and fro on the lawn, until the keen night air had checked the bleeding. The scar always remained, and added a peculiar tone to his expression.

CHAPTER VIII.

I WAS awoke the next morning by the kiss of Louisa, the laugh of her father and the maids, and "your water's cold, sir, and prayers over!" I am afraid I jumped out too suddenly—for there was a great tittering and rushing out of the room. By-and-by there came a gentle knock.

"Well?"

"May I come in?"

"Certainly *not*," I replied, as the door appeared to be opening, and I retreated behind my bed.

"What is the matter, Horatio?" said my sister—"are you unwell?"

"Oh! no—I shall be down presently."

"Pray do! you have alarmed the whole house."

My toilet was soon made, and I reached the breakfast-parlour in time to save the meal; for they never waited for anyone. It was very silent and I was left with Ellen and Charlotte.

"What could have detained you so long?" enquired Ellen.

"Why, I did not get to sleep until very late, and I was not awakened when Hardy called me."

"Well, never mind—you have not many more lazy days to pass, but I must not countenance your absence from prayers. How is it that Louisa does not wake you? She always took care that you should be up and ready?"

"Oh! I am grown too big," I replied, rather angry at Charlotte's laughing.

"Well, perhaps, they are right; you must be made a man of to-day. See the sun is really chasing the fog away, and nature seems to smile on our undertaking. And now I will explain more to you respecting the proceedings about to take place—it has been arranged in compliment to you that to-day the foundation of the school erected by Horatio Howard Brenton, is to be laid by one of the chief magistrates of the county, as you are a minor, and you are called upon to engage to support it to the best of your ability, for which I am to be your sponsor until you reach the age of twenty-five, when the sole direction of it as well as of the estates on which it is built, are to come into your own possession under the deed you will hear read; but under the *proviso* remember, revealed to you to-day."

About ten o'clock, Sir Charles Harrison, one of the county magistrates drove up with his family, and they were introduced. I was then presented as the infant for whom he had been solicited to act. He shook me warmly

by the hand. Her ladyship condescended to kiss me, and papa motioned the daughters nothing loth 'to follow suit.' They were all over twenty, and I was somewhat afraid of being swallowed. The boys condescended to shake hands, and I was invited whenever I could spare time to visit them. The Rector observed—"He will be off on Monday 'to re-join his ship.'"

This caused a start—"*His ship!*—he got a ship!—is he a sailor?—is he a King's officer?" demanded Sir Charles.

"Yes, Sir Charles," replied the curate—"and I can inform you, a credit to his profession—the adopted friend of your friend."

"What, Captain Lofty?"

"The same!"

"This small boy?"

"Yes, Sir Charles, this small boy has a large soul, or you know full well that he could be no friend or companion to Captain Lofty."

"Give me your hand again, my boy! How long have you to serve?"

"Four years yet, sir."

"Well, I hereby promise in this presence, if, at that date, I am alive and can command interest—I will on Captain Lofty's certificate —be he dead or alive—use my utmost exertion to get you your lieutenancy."

"Thank you, Sir Charles: I feel very much indebted to you for your kindness. But if having served up to that date, under Captain Lofty, has not brought me into contact with the enemy, and entitled me to claim it, I am afraid that the rank would lose all its charms."

"Well, Fitzjames, it will not do for us to be talking with little heroes. I am satisfied he is right; but we must not humour that style. Better men have served with bitterness years after they deserved to be admirals. I shall keep my word the stricter; for it would be a pity he should be left to wither on the tree. Oh! here comes Mr. Deedes."

Up came the bald, round-headed, round-bodied, little pursy man, made up of circumferences, together with his attendant, who was

a good imitation of a skeleton in a black suit. The Rector, curate, and Ellen followed him into the study. By and by the curate came out and made the necessary preparations for a table, on which to read and seal the instruments.

The rotundity of law then cleared his voice, asked for a decanter of water, a tumbler, &c., and making a prelude of "Be kind enough to be seated—the Rector on my left, this lady on my right, and Mr. Fitzjames in front!"

He recited, in his jargon, lots of nonsense which but two or three understood. I did not. At length he demanded, "Where is this suppositious heir? or he who is to produce powers constituting him heir, under sealed conditions if executed on, or within assignable limits after the 1st of September, 18—?"

Here I was produced.

"Your name?"

"Horatio Howard Brenton."

"All right, sir. You are, I believe, to

prove, by this paper which this lady will see filled and attested, that you are the present apparent descendant of Horatio Howard Brenton, by royal license as aforesaid, &c.; that by these presents he wishes his property and great tithes, livings, presentations, &c., shall, in fact, be in your gift, sir, when you get them —don't laugh, this is the literal meaning— and that the curacy shall run invariably in the parallel relationship, which is clearly at present in the Fitzjames family, until they fail in male issue of that name, or fail to educate one of the said male descendants to hold this curacy, or forfeit it by quitting it for another of greater value. But it is provided that the occupant shall never hold any other situation, &c., the intention being to tie him to the school, which he is strictly to supervise, and for the due attention to which he will be allowed a stipend of £400 per annum, a decent house equal to such an income, and certain lands named for pasturage of horses and cows, as the said parties may

agree, &c. The rector is to pay over to the curate the said stipend, and is to hold the vicarage of Stoughton, and derive all the tithes, benefits, or titles thereof during his natural life."

Whilst the part relating to the Fitzjames family was being read, I observed that the surprise which I felt was shared by all the auditors except the curate and my guardian. The rector, indeed, lifted up his eyebrows into such a slanting position that they seemed in danger of falling off his forehead. So far as I could form any decision respecting the expression worn by the curate during the recital, it seemed to say, "You see! in spite of my defeat, I have still a dangerous weapon in my hands!" But Ellen listened to this portion of the deed, as she had to its mere formal parts, with an aspect of calm expectation.

And now, several of those present having signed various papers, we set off to the scene of the day's proceedings. The whole country side was locked up in a hard and bitter frost;

but a little drifting sleet fluttered here and there like a handkerchief of lace. There was a gleam of sunshine which showed, in all its naked grace, the spire of the new Gothic church on Willow-tree Hill. There was a blythe holiday feeling in the air, which was increased by the groups of children who were coming across the Old Hag pastures, from the direction of Hatfield Green. As the little things came up to us and made their awkward obeisances, and I gazed at their comical faces pinched in towards the top of the nose, and broad and prominent about the mouth, I felt a sort of pang at the change which, in my name, was about to be effected in their mode of life.

I forgot their ill-tempered, slatternly mothers—their rude, unhealthy dwellings—their idle, quarrelsome games in muddy lanes—and only thought of all that the world is to a child during the course of a long, long leisure day. Why, it is a volume of romance, a book of travels, an historical register! Every hour is like one of those carpets in the Eastern tales which bore men to and fro over the lands

and the oceans from palace-garden unto palace-garden. A child's eye is a microscope —nothing escapes it, from a dead leaf to a water-rat: it makes a telescope of a piece of straw, and sees afar off without the aid of the optician's art. A child's mind is a kaleidoscope, and changes its mood with sudden, quick transitions. All the infant asks is liberty and leisure, and it will find its own school, and be its own schoolmaster. And here had I, Horatio Howard Brenton, been building them a little red prison-house—porched, gabled, and palisadoed, according to the approved style—where, between plaster walls, they were to be converted from wild little savage things, into savage little tame ones. I am afraid I was, for the moment, very ungrateful to my guardian.

We arrived at the church, had a most impressive address, and then, moving out into the church-field, were received by the yeomanry and band, and hundreds of persons from all quarters.

We proceeded on to a line of tents, which were more like a fair, than simple places for refreshments; and having entered, we passed on to the end, where a small house was erected, and a huge stone, weighing, at least, two tons, suspended over another of equal dimensions, having four iron rods, which were adapted to enter holes in the upper stone. The trowel, spade, wheel-barrow, &c., were all ready; and Sir Charles having made a splendid speech in my name, the scroll, coins, &c., were then enclosed in tinfoil, layer after layer, dipped in warm resin—and inserted in the cavity; the masons mixed the cement—Sir Charles slashed it about in great style, and as the stone was lowered, proclaimed the foundation as laid in my name; prayed that I might protect and foster it; and that many champions, not only of their religion, but also their hearths, might spring from this day's deed.

"And now, my men, three hearty cheers for your king—for your founder, three more; and for Miss Ellen, make the welkin ring."

It did ring, and guns and every unearthly sound succeeded.

Our duty carried us to the old school-rooms, and there was Ellen again before us. Fanny distributed the prizes to the boys, and had an encouraging word for each. I distributed those for the girls, who were all much delighted, and kept curtseying about me, so long, that I could not comprehend what was yet to be done. However, that phantom Charlotte had been working mischief; and the village sage, advancing, said "Sure, zur, ye would not refuse a kiss to these little beings?" Not I; and I believe they worked round me like a chain pump, for some got kissed twenty times over, until the laugh enabled me to bolt, when there was 'one more cheer for Horatio;' and I reached the house, where Fanny abused me terribly for my naughty behaviour, Ellen adding, "Do not spare him, Fanny." Charlotte was distributing her blankets, and as each passed off I could hear their remarks: "Oh, bless her beautiful counte-

nance, it will keep us warm all the winter." "She knows how to give; but they learn it all of the guardian angel."

In the evening, the villagers had their dance, where we were expected to perform the act of leading off. This was done by Sir Charles and Ellen, the curate and Charlotte, the fat lawyer and Fanny, the group being completed by myself and the Belle of the parish, presented me by Louisa, with "as good as she's pretty." We then retired to dress for dinner. There was more dancing in the evening, and I again led off with the village belle.

What a joyous, handsome little thing my partner was! I don't know what to compare her to, unless—I hope my readers will forgive me—but really she was more like a bottle of claret, held up to the light, than anything else. There was such a rich vitality about her! A vivid kind of light seemed to fall from her, as from other people fall shadows. I do not mean to say that she was as handsome as Ellen, or as glorious as Charlotte;

but there was a gentle serenity about the one, and a sarcastic pride about the other, which were entirely absent from the little girl who hung on my arm, like a newly-fallen rose leaf. Well! this comparison of her to wine, seemed to me to be more just than ever when I had resigned her, as I soon did, to the curate. The awkward figure and gait which had appeared particularly ungainly beside Charlotte's flowing grace, seemed to yield before some subtle influence as he danced with his new partner, and to be replaced by a kind of passionate energy. The girl's betrothed was present, and though he had not done me the honour to be jealous, there were plenty of scowls on his face, as Lucy was dancing with Fitzjames.

When all was over; when the carriages were whirring over the hard high-roads; and loud laughing, loud-talking groups were scattered amongst all the bye-ways and field-paths; Fitzjames and I walked up and down the lawn for a few minutes.

"It is a glorious world! A great many beautiful things in the world!" said the curate.

Twenty years afterwards, a dying friend made the same remark to me. I remember the scene well. The afternoon sunlight was shining through chimney-pots, and over slate roofs, on the mean walls of the little chamber. It was in a semi-genteel neighbourhood. If you flattened your left cheek against the right-hand window-pane, you could catch a glimpse of a very quiet square; and if you flattened your right cheek against the left-hand window-pane, you looked into a dirty mews. There was nothing either graceful or good to be seen in either direction. The man who was dying on the mean little bed, in that mean room, in that mean neighbourhood, had passed but a sorry life; no passionate love had lighted it, no great sorrow had given it the relief of vigorous shadow. And as I heard the words:—'It is a glorious world! There are a great many beautiful things in

the world!' a thought of all the possibilities of life rushed through my mind—of all the victories it might win, of the discoveries it might make, of the scenes it might behold! In the dying man's eyes I seemed to see the Alpine mountain-ranges, that are the symbol of eternity upon earth, and the clouds, that are the symbol of life in the heavens; and I saw there, as in a mirror, the broad river margins, on which small, white villages kneel, humbly and sweetly, like children, at their prayers; and towers grey, set in dark pine forests; and holiday cities, with sunlit spire and roof, and broad open squares, half light half shade, and tapestried balconies, and crowds collected to see some glorious pageant pass. But I must remember that all this time Fitzjames and I are on the lawn, gazing on the sparks that stream in countless millions from the great forge of eternity.

'A great many beautiful things in the world?'

"Yes! of course there are," I replied; "and Lucy is a very pretty girl."

"Yes—oh, yes! certainly," said the curate, in an altered tone of voice, assenting to the first part of my speech; "the stars are very beautiful, of course, and the trees, and——"

"Everything!" I suggested.

CHAPTER IX.

BLACK Monday arrived. No one in the house slept, and all came down to prayers looking pretty considerably out of sorts. Even Louisa called me with nervous impatience—"Do get up, sir, quick—there is your water—father will bring your shoes."

The curate was missing. He had received his sailing orders last night, had started early on the pony, and gone to the post-town to order the carriages, horses, relays, &c., and to bring the letters.

My mother appeared, dressed for travel, at

the breakfast-table, kissed me, and said—"We are ready, you see." She was becoming very jealous of Ellen's monopolizing me, and I was glad to perceive it. Her health and activity of mind were increasing, and she took more notice of me, although Charlotte was still her darling. I often looked full in my mother's face, and asked myself, could you ever have been so beautiful? but sorrow cuts deep and prunes away the ornaments, leaving but the outline.

I went to my room to collect any odds and ends which might yet remain unpacked, it looked as bare as a desert encampment when the tents are struck. That wicked little witch, Louisa, was there in high spirits.

"Come here, sir, you are not out of my command yet! Miss Ellen told me so. I am to take care of you to Portsmouth."

So saying, she gave me a kiss like lightning; almost upset her father, who stood by, half-laughing or crying, I could hardly understand which, and muttering—

"Will she ever be a woman, sir?—Just like her mother!—She died a merry-hearted girl!"—and then he did cry in earnest.

I shortly afterwards entered the library, and found Ellen seated there sealing packages with a very elegant seal—a carnelian set in dead gold, with fluted handle of avanturine was attached to the seal by a twisted chain cable of dead gold. No one but Ellen could have devised such a gem.

"Well, whose seal is that?"

"Yours, sir. Have you any objection to the crest and motto—'Brave as lion; mild as dove?'"

"I will examine it, and give you my opinion."

On looking at the impression, I found the Howard crest; and in the garter, 'Sola virtus invicta.'

"Well, I have no objection to the seal, the motto, and your interpretation; but can you justify me in asserting any right to use it? It would make me ridiculous—something like

the foolish merchant boys whose giddy parents permit them to wear the King's uniform."

"But, my dear Horatio, you are a Howard. Your grandfather merely took Brenton for the estates. If it happen that you are alienated from that property by your own conduct, you can discard the superfluous name of Brenton. Whilst you use it, no one will ever question your right. The seal was made for you. It is my gift, advisedly. I hope you admire it?"

"Oh! do I not? I shall never lose sight of it, nor forget this day."

"Nor your duty, Horatio. These packages are presents from you to the servants; and here is one for Fanny. They all contain what I know they desire. These for the family. Mine I shall leave to your taste in London, as also those for your mother, sister, the Rector and your schoolmaster. And now let me witness your first exploit—here comes Fanny. There is her package beside you."

At first I felt displeased at this matter-of-fact way of making Fanny a present; but a moment afterwards the wickedness of my heart suggested, that it afforded me a very good opportunity of crushing the little delicate, fluttering flirtation between my sweet little cousin and myself. So, assuming a protective, and elderly-relation air, I said—

"Come here, Fanny dear—we are going to part for a time, and as I know that no one here intends to forget me, I have thought that I ought not to let anyone here fancy that I have forgotten them. I am a bad hand at speeches, and the less said, the better, on such occasions. Will you gratify your cousin by accepting this. I have not opened it, dear Ellen ordered it."

As I concluded I placed the brown-paper parcel in her arms, with a slight condescending wave of my hands.

"Dear Horatio, I will most gratefully accept it, and so let us open it at the end of the drawing-room, where we shall not be disturbed."

Off we trotted and a very elegant workbox and writing-case were developed.

"And now I must thank you properly—Ellen approves," and she gave one of her convulsive, short, energetic, but dreadful, embraces—rushing away with her treasure, as if she had committed a robbery!

I was very much discomposed, and was quite grateful to the tame robin for its perching upon my shoulder and giving me an excuse for breaking the awkward silence of the room.

"Now," said Ellen—"I perceive that you can do your work—finish with the servants, for you have no time to lose."

I rang the bell as she left, and when the old butler came, found the task much heavier. He blessed me—I felt it from that good old man, and I blundered through the rest.

I must omit details of the parting, they only interest us. I was taken under the wing of Louisa in the rumble, and we could not see for fog or other more natural reasons,

how we got away. Cheers or screams frightened the horses, and we escaped being capsized as we turned short out of the gates into the main road, when I felt a short jerking sob on my right and found poor Louisa in sad distress. At length the poor girl recovered her voice to allude to the quantity of mist which was hanging about.

"Well!" I replied, "I see no mist about *you!*—all as clear and beautiful as ever.

"You always were a tiresome boy! If you don't leave off that foolish manner you have picked up, I must be simply your humble servant, and keep my proper distance. Father told me so. I am to watch you, take care of you, love you as my own child; but remember and make you feel that I am your servant."

"All right, Louisa! Your father is an excellent man. I am glad to find that he has such control over you, and that his ideas are so very just."

"Only a leaf out of the same book, Horatio. Miss Ellen schools us all; and she knows all

our thoughts and secrets — bless her soul! Yes, and everyone in the village too—old and young. But only think of our leaving before Christmas—why we shall lose a marriage!"

"A marriage!" I repeated. "Ellen not know it—nor Fanny—nor Charlotte?"

"Oh, yes; everyone but *you*. That pretty girl you danced with, and treated so shabbily as not to kiss. Yes, sir, the village talk of it. She is to be married to the Clerk, and they are to be the first master and mistress of the schools, until you dispose of them better. But surely, Master Horatio, you must know? How came you to send them, through father, that handsome marriage-present to help them commence housekeeping, and your own bed! Nonsense, you must know something. Did I not kiss you for it when I came up to clear your room?"

"Louisa, this is the first I know of it. Ellen did it for me, and through me, so as to make it my act. It gives me great pleasure."

"But, sir, surely you saw father, the clerk

and his intended, with her fine-looking brother, at the gate, as we turned through?"

"No, no! Louisa, I saw nothing. I was calculating how to save you, when you were in peril of being upset into the stream which runs beneath the gate-bridge, when the cheering frightened the horses."

"Indeed! very likely! You thought, perhaps, of your own dear neck, and what a nice cushion I should be to fall on. Do not think to deceive me with your fine speeches, I know human nature!"

"Well, perhaps, you do; but you perceive that I am not deaf—no, nor incapable of feeling either! I thought that that violent throb of your heart was for your father, Louisa, not for young—what's his name?"

"You get worse and worse, Mr. Horace; I shall ask to get inside, if you are not quiet."

"I am perfectly quiet, but I was not aware that I had touched such a tender chord. Pray what age may her brother be?"

"Nonsense! I will not be teased; I

quite a boy, like you, but not so impertinent."

"Really, Louisa, I must hold my tongue. You evidently are very much disconcerted. If this brother is younger than I, he cannot expect to be your husband."

"Husband!" she screamed; "you silly boy! If I had been married, more likely my son! But I will not talk any more; you force me to be silent."

"Well, Louisa, all I can say is that it is well Ellen looks after you; and if at any time I can help you, even if you marry, you know how happy it would make me."

"Marry! Mr. Horatio—never! I live with Miss Ellen, or you, if you marry and have a family, until some of you bury the troublesome, garrulous old woman. But here we are near London. Come, pay the turnpike—be alive! I have to take care of *you*."

There we landed. It was already dusk, and I thought I had seen few prettier little spectacles than that which now took place in the

lamplight between the coach and the hall-door. Louisa was so handsome and busy; Charlotte so handsome and amused; Ellen so handsome and thoughtful. Then there was the meeting between the proprietor of the house and the Rector—both of them fine grey-haired men in the decline of life, a dash of humour in their eyes, and a gentle seriousness about their lips. The scholar and the man of business seemed to have arrived at pretty much the same conclusions respecting things in general.

As we reached the private rooms prepared for our reception, the London letters were on the table—one for me from Dr. Howard, informing me that I was at liberty to remain in London as long as convenient to Ellen, and that the admiral was quite aware of my anxiety to be at my post. I was therefore to call on Mr. C——, at the Admiralty, use his name, and he would furnish me with the best information. He was not anxious for our arrival; the house was not yet sufficiently aired, and the man-servant would not be fairly in possession of

his offices until that evening. He had written to Ellen.

My mother was not fatigued; but took a warm bath, went to bed, and was present at dinner. Ellen changed her travelling dress, and escorted by the Rector, Charlotte, and myself, sallied out beyond the Haymarket, and there entered a jeweller's shop—I think Landtrap's, or some such name—in Coventry Street. Here I was to select some appppropriate presents for my mother, Charlotte, and Ellen. But in the two former Ellen helped me. She evidently was well-known—received the most marked respect; all other visitors being referred to the tall second in the house, or the assistants. When I whispered to Mr. L. that I was anxious to find something very suitable for a present to Ellen, he smiled rather sadly, I thought, hesitated a moment, and then took me aside and said—

"I have, in my office, a most beautiful, chaste, writing-book in gold and mother-of-pearl plates, folding so closely, that when

expanded, it is perfectly flat, and yet it rolls and becomes most secure for travelling."

He showed it me, and I opened it, finding, to my surprise, that the leaves were covered with almost obliterated pencil writing. Mr. L. then said—

"The expense, sir, shall be nominal. I have good reasons for this selection, of which you may know hereafter, and I *know* this will be *prized*."

"What!" I observed—"more mystery?"

"None to me, sir, with due deference," bowing very low; "I have known all the families long, sir."

"What have you been about?" inquired Charlotte; "we have been gazing at such treasures!"

"Well, so have I, and Mr. Landtrap."

And I was about to speak to Ellen of the acquisition I had made, when I felt, rather than saw, that the jeweller nervously wished that I should be silent.

A jeweller's shop! I would not willingly give way to fanciful sentiment; but even a

passing glance at a jeweller's always excites in me some emotion. Its contents are so, humanly speaking, imperishable, that their association with the details of life has something almost sublime in it. Tears cannot stain diamonds—age cannot wither them. Every jewel which is exposed to the vulgar passing gaze in a shop window in a crowded street, has sealed with its bright form many generations of warm, loving, clasping palms; and shot fiery, unabashed glances over bosoms long since turned to dust.

"Mr. Landtrap," said Ellen, "pray tell me where I can find the nearest and best shop for pulpit Bibles and Prayer-books."

"Allow me to send for a hackney-coach, and one of my young men will accompany you."

The coach was at the door, in we popped, and drove I know not where; but were set down at the door — the young man settling, acting as footman, and awaiting further commands. The Rector was very fidgetty, wishing to pay the coach, &c., saying—

"Ellen, he will overcharge you, and we shall have all sorts of abuse."

She smiled, put her finger to her lip, the storm was stayed.

"Now, Mr. C——, I wish to see some Bibles and Prayers, fit for a new parish church."

"Of what price, madam?"

"You perfectly understand me, I am sure. Parish country churches do not throw away their money on absurdities of binding. But I think, if I err not, I know this shop. I should like to see your principal."

"Oh, madam, I think he is at dinner."

"Not if my eyes do not deceive me."

"Dear me, how happy I am to see you again, madam, under my humble roof. It affords me very great pleasure," said the principal, who had been just behind his shopman, whilst the latter was speaking, and then he added, turning to a person who appeared to be his clerk—

"Here, Mr. Williams. This is Monday?"

"Yes, sir."

"Pay Johnston his week's wages in advance, and see him out; my character must not be tampered with by such unprincipled men."

Ellen was about to speak. But the principal, an old, venerable, tall man, putting his finger gently on the back of her gloved hand, said—"Do not, or we both shall repent. This young boy, and this reverend gentleman—who is known to me—must see that I fear God; and as my dealings are solely in religious books, I must have no pollution here. It is not clear to my mind, madam, that he who wilfully deceives, may not find it easy to do so when it suits his interests.

"And now, madam, your pleasure, I understand."—Waving to the leading shopman, he desired him to bring the books he was about to pack for Dulwich. As he placed them on the counter, the Rector exclaimed—

"How very neat—how chaste, and yet imposing!"

"Yes, sir, they are; nevertheless, nearly our lowest in price, and the type, I think, perfect."

He opened them, and the Rector exclaimed—

"Very fine, very clear, even by this light; but would they wear?"

"Oh, yes, sir! It has been determined that this new mode of pressing, just adopted, gives such smoothness that the surface does not, as before, act as a file to take and retain any dust from the hand."

Ellen whispered to me this was to be my gift, and then the bookseller having, in accordance with an intimation from her, introduced us into his office, she said—

"If you are under any engagement, Mr. C——, for these books, bring me the duplicates."

"No, madam; either of these, but not both, are disposable."

"Will you be kind enough, then, to have inserted in one of them the following:—'Presented to the Reverend Dr. Howard, Rector of Ashdown Vale, &c., by Horatio Howard Brenton, in token of respect and gratitude.' Now, Horatio, ask Dr. Howard to come here."

As I put my head out, he and Charlotte were looking for us; I beckoned, and they entered. Mr. C—— was about to withdraw, but Ellen said—

"No secrets. Horatio wishes to speak."

I did.

"Dr. Howard, I am sure that you will not refuse to receive, from a little boy, those two sacred volumes. I cannot add more—my feelings overpower me."

I always endeavoured to be out of Charlotte's way, when I had to say anything a little above commonplace; for her whole heart seemed to laugh at anything formal or constrained. Her gracious, buoyant manner is common to almost all girls now; but at the period of which I am writing, it was much more rare. I was rather frightened at her habit of sarcasm, and I looked rather timidly towards her when I had finished my little speech. Her face looked for the moment like a sheaf of golden corn, with poppies and blue corn-flowers in it. I soon saw that

I had better have left out the part about the overpowering nature of my feelings. What a girl she was! The only one of the present age at all like her is Flora B——

Dinner ended, we were all seated comfortably by the fire, when who should enter but Doctor Howard, a most welcome visitor. He had some fears about my mother, and had come up to escort her down to prevent confusion. The packages from Landtrap arrived; Ellen opened hers, exclaiming—

"Oh! you most unaccountable boy—where did you find this—this inestimable treasure?"

She spoke with an earnestness scarcely warranted by the occasion, and made me almost jealous by the absorbed manner in which she fixed her gaze upon my present; then, looking up, she said, as though she would account for the reverie into which she had fallen—

"It is our family property, and has been lost as long as memory serves me. I do, indeed, thank you for this, and must ever remain your debtor. It bears my initials in every imagin-

able shape. It was made in India for——. It was stolen, and Mr. Landtrap was employed years since to trace it."

"Let me see it!" exclaimed mama, evidently much excited.

It was placed before her. She gazed almost stupified, and fell back in her chair, faintly exclaiming—

"Yes, I too have seen it before."

All was now consternation. Even Ellen was frightened and at fault. We were all painfully distressed. She presently recovered, and was soon aware of the cause of alarm.

"Be satisfied, Ellen, I am not ill."

Then, much excited, and as though she were imitating both the tone and the words of some one else, she continued—

"But who robbed his father? He was no common housebreaker—who stole his deeds? —who, in fact, reduced him to nothing? Call him not gentleman! He was an accomplished robber, and it is the destiny of Horatio, by your agency and the will of God, to un-

kennel him—make him disgorge his plunder, and suffer the contempt which he knows too well awaits him!"

Then she bowed her head, submissively adding—

"I fear, Ellen, I shall not live to see the day of your triumph; for to you alone all credit is due. I solemnly promised never to oppose your will as regards my children's interests. In the hands of the Rector and yourself, I am also, and have been treated as if I really had been your sister. So am I content to die."

"Talk not of dying, mamma: you have promised to see me a captain, and to dance at my wedding."

Next morning it was arranged that the Rector and myself should go to Camberwell. We first, however, walked to the Admiralty, where I was introduced to Mr. C——. No accounts of the *Amelia* or *Plover*.

We then took stage to Camberwell, and soon reached the old school. It was about

noon, and I got them at once a half-holiday. The master was very proud of his pupils, and of their coming back to see him; so that we had to stay dinner. All my leading playmates had vanished: many, bitten by my going to sea, were seeking me on the wide ocean. Poor fellows! not one prospered—"lost, wrecked, ruined, or destroyed." He never ceased telling of my exploits, opened the closet, and held up the identical tin Guy Fawkes can, with which I was to have spread desolation to our neighbour. However, he added—"He will prosper yet; and I never think of you in my nightly prayer, 'for all who have gone forth of this house,' without congratulating myself that I never corrected him for faults of spirit. And now, Horatio, surely you will dine with us; it will be such a triumph."

"Most assuredly I will. But I have brought you a trifling present; and the Rector has desired me to say, that if you can absent yourself from your holiday scholars, he will be delighted to see you."

"I shall be delighted, for I am now free. I keep no holiday-prison now. But let me see what we have here. You are a conjuror, my dear boy. This is the very book I wanted, and was intending to purchase, a few days since."

"No conjuror! I happened to be looking for a book for you in that shop, and heard that you were interested in it; and, as utility doubles the value, I selected it for you."

Who can ever forget school dinners? The pleasant, whispering, half-rudeness of the younger boys; the stiff, awkward politeness of the elder ones; the air of genial severity worn by the master; and the humble watchfulness of the ushers.

After dinner, the ushers came to shake hands, and the master made a speech to the boys, holding me up as being very nearly a hero. And I was fool enough to address them also. I hardly recollect what I said. The beer was very small, and I suppose it

acted with me as it had done with the master. As nearly as I can remember, I said :—

"Now, my lads, our worthy master has been gammoning you, when he advises you to follow my steps, or those of the foolish boys who started on their dark journey after me, without lamps or any provision. The British navy is like any other crowd. If you have money or friends, you can jump into a hackney coach, or your own or friend's carriage, and be driven to the Admiralty, *show your tally ;* but mind, be quite sure of the number of *votes* inscribed on the back of it. All right ? off to Portsmouth, and your course is pretty fair. But if you are compelled to buffet with the crowd long ere you reach the Admiralty, your clothes are probably defaced; the porters say— 'Here, take this card, now, sir ; go into that room,' and in a few hours you may be told— 'Call again; Admiral C. cannot see you to-day.'

"Well, suppose you are entered on board some of H.M.'s ships. You are in the crowd still. You stand in somebody's way, and you

will soon be displaced for that somebody. I will allow even that you have money. That will not buy friends. But it may purchase you deadly enemies. Want of good society, or any society, is felt. Your money friends introduce you to their friends, and, eventually, you are ashamed to return home! Think, my lads of twelve and fourteen years' arduous and honourable service, with good certificates, and patronized by captains, and yet still a midshipman! possibly to leave the service because you have no parliamentary friends.

"Turned ashore—the four valuable years from thirteen to seventeen lost—who will take you into business? Misfortune is a crime in commercial life. Stick to your own society so long as it will furnish you with an existence.

"On the other hand, to those, whose fathers command interest and money, and who can secure to their sons friends in their profession, or purchase commissions in the army, both services are glorious. But tell your

fathers to inquire where all have gone who left with *me!* Do not be blinded."

Not a cheer. *Exit solus.*

Every one seemed disappointed. I could not help that. The ushers looked on me with surprize—almost horror. The master, and even the Rector, were, to use the expression, quite 'taken aback.'

Speaking on the same subject, however, with the ushers and the two latter gentlemen, in the course of the afternoon, I took occasion somewhat to qualify the observations of my abrupt speech, saying—

"Naval officers belong to no scale of society, as to family blood or interest. If an officer is correct, gentlemanly, and is fortunately placed, he may outstrip all his titled competitors. We have this plainly before us in the cases of many of our greatest ornaments.

"In proposing to send a boy into the navy, what you are bound to observe is, what is the habit or disposition of the boy. No iron-bound bully is wanted in the navy — no physical

strength. Nelson and Collingwood were not of this breed, Put it to yourself first—How will this boy push his way? Has he any talent to commend him? Is he chivalrously bent to devote himself, his life and fortunes, without hope beyond advancement, to fight his country's battles? Is his temper such that he can stand reproof—*unmerited reproof* —with abiding patience until his justification is worked out, and his martyrdom crowned by the most generous confidence and support of his captain? Is he above provocation? Can he stand the close, oppressive reasoning of an unprincipled superior, who determines to rid himself of one who stands in the way of a friend? Can he eventually fall back on a competence, and not become an intolerable burthen to his family and to society, should he dislike the profession? If he is proof against these, send him to take his chance of being 'food for powder.'

"But, as I am speaking on this subject, let me make one other remark. Above all

things, avoid sending a boy to sea merely because you consider him *fit for nothing else*—because you think him a bully, and that the navy is the only proper profession for such an one. Such was young C., my old schoolfellow here. I remember well that his wildness, coarseness, and bullying disposition were especially *insisted on* as reasons for sending him into the navy. He is dead! Hear his short career, and think what you and I, perhaps, in a remote degree, have to answer for. We did meet only to exchange stories, for I prevented his joining the *Cleopatra*. He has left no friends—at this day—to bewail him, and no one but the assembled company can know his name. I am therefore free to tell his short career. He left the school some few weeks after me, and entered the *Busy*. We met at Halifax, and he was so unhappy that he would have joined anything to get out of that ship. No one would have him! I had heard his whole tale *from himself!*—it was no secret—and I told him 'he could not join us, or I would leave.' He con-

fessed all, and I shudder to think of the '*sailor boys*' you send us. He grossly insulted one of the crew—you all know he would have been a bully here—but he had his masters, on whom he fawned. Well, he used language that is not permitted in any respectable vessel. The man—a captain of the maintop—replied—'No more than you, sir.' He complained that he had been insulted and struck by the man, and, in self-defence, he had been compelled to strike him—a fly kicking an elephant! The first-lieutenant heard the man's defence; said, 'he was very sorry, but he could not doubt the word of an officer.' The captain was guided by the report of the first-lieutenant. It was *death* by the naval law! —but they would then lose a *good man.* Yet this *good man's* character did not help him! He was ordered for punishment. Hear the character of the man. He knew his innocence—he knew the value, as he fondly imagined, of his character, and he was led to believe that he could not be punished. The captain

sent for Mr. C—— into the cabin—questioned him in private, and added—

"'Well, sir, you have now a chance of making your character in this ship, by begging that man off before punishment is actually inflicted. You have admitted enough, in my mind, to satisfy me that some unaccountable quarrel, reducing you to his level, or possibly beneath him, is at the bottom of this. My duty is very painful; you only can relieve me—be resolved. Tell the truth, sir. No one will think more highly of you than myself. I shall defer punishment until seven bells.'

"That man could have brought three witnesses to prove his entire innocence, by *word* or *deed*. They were ready to come forward at the proper moment. He disdained their officious interposition—nothing but the word of this officer could, in his estimation, purge him from so foul a charge. The hands were turned up—the customary forms gone through—C—— was silent!—the article of war was read—and he was asked if he had anything to say.

"'With your permission, sir, one word—you all know I am innocent. God help Mr. C——!' and he sprang overboard!

"The *Busy* went to sea, and was never heard of—it was supposed foundered. Seamen are superstitious; the name of *Busy* will ever thrill the nerves of all who knew that boy and her fate. I am superstitious enough to imagine that her fate is interwoven with his. Was it a just retribution even for blinded judgment? I was told it was not the intention to flog that man, but to refer it to a court-martial, and disgrace the officer. Fate decreed otherwise."

"Thank you, Horatio," said Mr. Johnson; "I have profited much by your visit to-day. We schoolmen see little beyond our walls. Our ideas are not carried—as you have been, over more miles in a week than I shall be in my life, nor jostled as you will be. And now, time is short. I know you must be in town by a certain hour. I will send for the coach to call for you."

"Oh, no! we will walk to it," replied the Rector. "Our rule is, never, when avoidable, to send two persons to perform the duty of one."

"Well, we will walk with you. Full twenty minutes yet will elapse before it passes the Green finally."

The coach soon overtook us; and—with the promise, if I wrote from Portsmouth, he would come and see a man-of-war, and, if possible, that *rara avis* Captain Lofty — we parted very reluctantly; the Rector declaring that his intimacy should not end there, as he saw many beautiful traits in that man's character completely clouded, overwhelmed in the dust of a pedagogue life.

"What are you thinking of?" he said, inquiringly.

Now, I am not quite certain that I was thinking of anything at all at the moment; but I replied—

"Why, I was thinking if you do not have such men as our friend, how are you to obtain

good education. As you lower the scale, you decrease the value of the child."

The Rector looked at me a moment, took a pinch of snuff rather over-ceremoniously, and then said—

"True, Horatio; but, between you and me privately, you are too fond of showing off. It is a most dangerous habit; and let me now warn you that Captain Lofty detests it, and once at our house alluded to it."

This was rather a blow, and kept me silent for at least a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time I ejaculated—

"What a very forward boy they must have thought me to-day!"

"No, not exactly, my dear Horatio. This was a peculiar event. You had to perform what you believed conscientiously to be a very unpleasant duty. You did it better than I expected; and you left so good an impression, even on me, that I wish when you have leisure that you would commit it to paper. I would like to possess it, and——

Here we are at Charing Cross! Come, it is late: we must jump into a hackney coach."

In a few moments we had joined the happy family, and dinner was reported by Louisa as "ready, when that gentleman is,"—a very decided hint to wash away school-dust. She never could remember that I was not a little boy.

CHAPTER X.

Ellen, mamma, and Charlotte, had been escorted by Doctor Howard, who seemed to know more of London than anyone gave him credit for, to every imaginable place of interest, taking Louisa as shawl-bearer; and in the shortest possible time had seen the lions, from the Tower, east, up to Bullocks, I think they said, west—including the automatons, &c., at Spring-gardens, a feat almost beyond belief; and Louisa had been equipped with finery sufficient to last some years, I should imagine, somewhere in Ludgate-hill. 'London had not then come out of town,' as Grimaldi afterwards had it.

Dinner was enlivened by the humorous re-

cital of the Camberwell scene by the Rector, aided by the animated discussions on the wonders seen by the ladies; after which we drew round the fire, and finished the winter's tale. At seven, to our surprise, the carriage was at the door, and off we were all hurried, for some fresh surprise. The Doctor and Ellen moved the springs, no one asked questions, we were all packed in—Louisa and the doctor's servant in the rumble—and were put down in some farmyard, Ithought—at least, there was a preponderance of powerful vegetable effluvium. Four gentlemen and four ladies—party eight—passed through a young turnpike, up steps, where money was paid, as I thought, at a sentry-box, as I saw soldiers with firelocks strutting about. "Keep together!" the Doctor exclaimed and we were carried on by the flood-tide, Charlotte griping me very hard by the arm, evidently frightened, until we entered a sweep diverging right and left, and a great box into which the doctor peered, calling 'box-keeper!' and, showing a talismanic card,

we were suddenly ushered into a new world. Never shall I forget my astonishment; Charlotte clung still more convulsively to me, and at length we were seated. Charlotte and myself, unrobed by Louisa (who, with the Doctor's man were very genteelly-dressed, and possibly eclipsed us), were pushed down stairs to the front-row, with the Doctor between us. The Rector, mamma and Ellen, behind us, and then the other pair.

The reader will know that we were in Covent Garden Theatre. The pieces performed were 'Henry the VI.,' 'She Stoops to Conquer,' and the new pantomime.

It would be waste of time to describe our feelings. The surprise, and appearance of magnificence to our young ideas, furnished matter for conversation for many days. We got home late, had tea, and the men (ahem!) had oysters. The first deliberate, cold-blooded murder I had ever perpetrated, for we were told by the Doctor that they were only to be enjoyed by opening them ourselves. From

such barefaced cruelty the ladies very properly withdrew, but I once thought I detected an inclination to taste, and a lingering as if they expected the Doctor to press them, but his head was averted; and it is strange how men when once their gluttonous propensities peep out, seem to lapse into absolute barbarism.

This was the Doctor's failing—he was an epicure, a *bon vivant*, a man who forgot (not himself, at least, in this one point) the feelings of all around him, the instant that cancerous excitation set his appetite in motion. Then, too, he was inspired with eloquence, but it was confined to the good things of this world.

This appetite—this wonderful gastronomic enemy—how powerful art thou!—and yet, how are thy dangerous features glossed over—a mantle is cast over thee to disgrace thy younger brother, inebriety. Surely thou art the elder, and more to be dreaded! Gout is thy royal companion. The potentates of the earth bow before thee, and send forth their sauces to render

palatable things unclean ; and, goaded by thee, they seek relief in thy insidious brother to cool the burning heat thou, the evil genius, hast created !

The physician bows to thee because thou art more powerful—he privately declares you the great enemy—yet in his very draught or pill he consults your interests and his—he falls down and worships thee and thy brother, and yet in the height of his profound sober knowledge, tells his patient—' I am sorry to perceive, sir, that your constitution has been so much undermined by ardent spirits, that I fear your case is hopeless.'

Shall I dream, and of what, under the pressure of so many thoughts and the murders of this night? I never swallowed oysters before. The Doctor tells me they are very wholesome, but poison sometimes.

We are to move to Guildford to-morrow, and on to Portsmouth next day. But that will depend on the morrow.

After breakfast, two carriages were at the

door, packed. Mamma and Charlotte, the Doctor and Rector, were packed into one, with the servants behind. Ellen and myself ensconced ourselves in in the second—a light little, new chariot, on which I noticed the Howard crest and garter, similar to my seal —therefore not mamma's or Ellen's.

The day was beautiful; we made good progress, and, at length, reached Guildford, where rooms had been prepared for us, dined, slept, and moved on at nine for Portsmouth, which we reached at four; and crossed in one of of the Admiral's boats. The boat's crew were directed to carry up the baggage, but the Doctor determined otherwise, employing some donkey-carts in the performance of that duty, thus preventing the crew from straying; and before seven we were seated, and really *at home*, in a very snug cottage, at a very nice dinner (of course), and very happy.

The Admiral had already intimated his wish to Dr. Howard to make my mother's acquaintance, but etiquette required that I should first

call and pay my respects to him. I did so, accompanied by the Doctor, and was very kindly received. The Admiral regretted the season was against pleasure on the water, adding—"But, remember, Doctor, you have only to prescribe the barge to my secretary, and you understand each other well; he will avoid any interference with duty. And, as this officer belongs to my ship at present, he will, of course, do the duty in the barge, when she is wanted."

On our return, we called at the Royal Hospital, at Haslar, and the governor accompanied us to return the visit—the commencement of a very happy intimacy with all that establishment. The military commandant also called on the Doctor. We were soon at home everywhere, and were established residents without further ceremony. We then visited Forton prison, and to those who never saw that wonderful establishment it was one of the richest possible treats. We were all very much astonished, at the variety of trades, and, in return, greatly surprised everyone at home

by the transfer of wares, of the most delicate and perfect workmanship, to our little cottage, now truly *ornée*—in fact a perfect museum.

But I shuddered. What at? I will not mention facts. I had heard fearful, incredible tales at Halifax; and none but the 'stationers' there can understand me beyond my question.

"Pray, Dr. Howard, are you sure that the poor prisoners at Forton profit individually or collectively by the sale of their wares?"

"My dear boy, how can you doubt it? I know nothing of the 'secrets of the prison-house;' but in England, at least, we must give them credit for justice."

That quick-sighted Ellen was not to be deceived.

"Why, Doctor, do you lay emphasis on England? What is this mystery? Surely we have not been deceived in this charity?"

"Oh, no; but as Horatio has started the subject, I will tell you in private to what idle stories he alludes. He should never stir a doubtful question, involving character, with-

out better proof than the scandal of small talk in such a place as Halifax."

I pass over these days. One event only worth notice occurred. One very beautiful, but sharpish, morning, the Doctor prescribed the barge; we visited the dockyard, saw its wonders, lunched with the Admiral at one; examined a three-decker—clean as a new pin—and got home just in time to escape a heavy snow-storm.

Next morning we were agreeably surprised by a visit from Captain Noble, who had arrived late the previous evening, found the Doctor, and came on with him to breakfast. We were very glad to meet again. He had Saumarez as his first, and Fitzjames he had taken out of some ship at Basque Roads. I did not half like the conjunction. I was to join him, and to be conveyed to the *Amelia* off Brest, and might pass my time in either vessel, as circumstances rendered advisable to Captain Lofty. I must confess I had taken a cautious dislike to Saumarez, until he cleared

his character about tale-bearing relative to his captain, who had let him off very handsomely. Noble was a fine fellow, and I soon detected that he thought he had seen worse specimens than Charlotte. He was twenty-eight—she but fourteen; she stole glances at him which satisfied me that she ought to go home, or he to sea. But time and salt water wash away thousands of such fancies. Ellen did not approve, and soon made some excuse to carry her out of shot. They never exchanged words—that, perhaps, made it still more serious. His rough voice might have frightened her.

At noon, my order to join the *Plover* was in my hands, and I was to report myself at the admiral's office, at nine a.m., on the 25th of December—two days hence. This was sharp work—but the service cares not for the 25th day of any month. Among the new articles provided, I had now a new sextant; the other was second-hand—good enough for a learner to spoil, and I was quite at home in mechanical mischief to do that duty effectually; re-silver-

ing it at least once a-week, and shifting every screw in it — still it was serviceable, and served for bad weather, or to go through the *forms* between seven bells and noon, when the sun might chance to be caught—too valuable an acquisition in channel-groping to be idly despised. My drawing-case and instruments was exchanged for a better; and I had become very fond of sketching — the reason being, perhaps, that it was an occupation Captain Lofty much delighted in. But my chief delight only arrived last night, and developed itself to be re-packed. A very beautiful double-barrelled gun, the gift of the Rector— ammunition, &c.; all to be taken great care of until I really found good use for it—for I had still my little-boy's gun, and it did its work well. This new gun was indeed a life gift, fit to pass as an heirloom. There was also a *bijou* little case of chemicals and tests; but directed to the care of Captain Lofty, only to be used if he approved. Such were the Rector's gifts.

I cannot describe this parting, it was too harrowing. I had been made to feel, for the first time, the sweets of home. I was a very different being now to the boy glad to escape school, and brave the world two years and more since; I was now a reflecting animal. Was I happier? Yes. But I had 'tasted the sours as well as the sweets,' as the 'blue-nosed fairies' would say. Well, at nine, torn from home by the doctor, I was handed over to Captain Noble; the Doctor forsaking me only as we pushed off at Gosport.

At the admiral's office, he received his final orders, and I was sent for to take leave of the admiral.

"Sir," said he, "are you acquainted with Lord St. Vincent, or related?"

"I am not aware, sir."

"He requests my attention to you; and this letter, I believe, contains his advice, maxims, or instructions—one of which has, I know, been well impressed upon your mind. That is, that for all rational purposes it has been ordained, based on our religion, that we

should be worthy of our trust; obey conscientiously every order we receive from our superior, and never canvass or discuss his reasons; nay, even blindly to execute orders peremptorily given, should they, even to your weaker mind, apparently lead to certain death. Without these vigorous feelings, you do not belong to the school of Lord St. Vincent, myself, or Captain Lofty; and professional *seeming* is hypocrisy, calculated to be of the deepest, deadliest mischief to the profession to which you have the honour to belong. Sir! I own no children, no followers, but those who do their duty! I am yours as you deserve!"

Then, making me a low bow, giving me a warm grasp of the hand, he added—

"God bless you, sir! My last imperative *order* is, you will call on me the instant you return, if I command here or elsewhere. And now, sir, tell Captain Noble I wish to see him."

The interview ended—the coxswain picked up my traps, and, touching his curls, said—

"Don't remember *me*, Mr. Howard?"

"Indeed, I do; but I shall talk more to you on board."

"Mr. Saumarez and Mr. Fitzjames, and some other old *Cleopatrees* there, will be glad to see you among us again, sir."

What pen could describe the sensations produced by those magic words? None but seamen—I discard 'sailors' now—can appreciate them!

As we neared the beautiful little *Plover*, heads were seen peeping stealthily over the gunwale to watch the new-comer; and as I followed the captain, I shook hands with the first-lieutenant, Fitzjames, and, turning forward, saw many old faces smiling with their fingers to their curls. But it was cut very short by the captain's old short mode of command—'Silence!' Up went his right fin, and Lieutenant Saumarez's 'Up anchor!' as pithy, was all that was said, save the diminutive boatswain's shrill call and sharp 'Up anker!'

She was already 'short,' and in no time she was under every stitch of canvass dead before it, steering for Cowes.

"Mr. Howard, my glass—and bring your own, sir—you will find it in my cabin."

I soon found that the captain was taking his last fond look just to the left of the hospital. I did the same, and there I saw the yellow chariot again! and could distinguish all our party waving handkerchiefs. Captain Noble sung out—

"Stand up, Howard, and wave, that they may see that all's well."

He appeared to wait a little, and then he waved his hand.

"That will do," he said—and he paced the deck with rather a pensive air.

The steward, his old marine in the *Cleopatra*, hauled his wind under my lee, and said—

"The Captain requests the pleasure of your company at *five to-day*, sir."

This I suppose was to afford full time after getting to rights.

The watch was called, and down I dived, with Fitzjames, to be introduced to his mess-mates; for they would not acknowledge me.

Captain Noble said I was only a passenger, and his guest until his further pleasure was known. However, the war-boys knew what generosity meant; friendship then was no idle term. Fitzjames addressed them—

"Gentlemen, this is, as you all know, one of the old *Cleopatra's*, and I am sure we shall feel very proud if he will consent to become an honorary member of our mess, as we all are of the *Amelia*."

A roll on the table announced assent.

Fitzjames said—"Done! In the name and by the authority of the middies royal, of the saucy little *Plover*, you are hereby elected an honorary member of the said free-hearted fellows, and in token thereof I hereby hang your cap on this peg."

"Be seated."

I then was installed a brother, at home then and for ever.

But I must not confuse this history with any account of the glorious hours I spent there; for the affairs of the individuals already on the

tapis would, if I dare commit one-tenth to paper, furnish more volumes than the public would read, or my publisher care to print.

And now I began to look about me, for my hammock-man, and, very much to my astonishment, almost horror, I found it was my old faithful servant in the *Cleopatra*, whom I thought killed by a fall from a loft, and landed at the hospital, by myself, as I believed, to be buried.

"Is that you, Kennedy?"

"Sure it is, then; who else would you be having me?"

"Tell me, how came you here?"

"Sent to look after you, sure, and take care of ye."

"Wonderful!"

"Not at all, sir; and the drummer too, your marine, here he is. Here *we are*, and some others too, looking out for a view of your dacent countenance."

"I will speak to them all presently. Here, drummer, glad to find *you* here; there is the

key of my chest—it is almost time to think of dressing."

"Oh, no, sir! Five o'clock to day, sir."

"All right. And now, Kennedy, tell me, how is it that you were not buried?"

"Buried, is it? Sure, you would have me dead first? I am not so aisily kilt, sir. I am something like a Kilkenny cat. No one ever saw one of them die! I was stunned, and took a nap; when I awoke, they told me the old 'Pattie' had sailed and left me behind at hospital. Nobody there knew me, or could tell me more; so I thought, perhaps, I had jist been fighting, for the honour of the barky, with some of those Melampuses, and carried to hospital by mistake. They have been trying to gammon me in this craft—and, to make it out I fell from aloft and was kilt. That won't do; Pat Kennedy never was such a lubber as to let go with his toes, even if his hands were otherwise employed."

"Well, now, I will see the others,"—and seating myself on my chest, I held my levee to many more of the picked men of the *Cleopatra*.

"But how came you all here?"

"That is soon told; we came for you, sir. Surely Mr. Fitzjames told ye!"

"No."

"Why, *we* are all *Amelia's*, sir, sent in with Mr. Fitzjames in a prize, and specially, we understood, to Portsmouth, that we should return when you came. Then, sir, you know the Admiral took care that we should go back to our proper ship. We only reached port the same night as the *Plover*, and here we are—one night's drift only, sir—never mind."

Such were good specimens of the old war-dogs. Not one of those men ever had seen, during the time we served together, the cat used on any but a thief, or worse character. They were allowed leave the instant the ship reached port, and no fears were entertained for our men, they could not be kidnapped without detection—for they were too fond of their own craft to try their luck elsewhere.

CHAPTER XI.

And now at the hour of five we went to dinner.

"So, Howard, you have met with some old friends. I shall try to keep one or two, if Captain Lofty will let me"—casting a glance at Fitzjames to see if he was inclined. He looked— yes, and said—

"Wherever I am ordered to serve, sir, I hope to afford satisfaction."

"No use telling us that," said Captain Noble; "we know you well enough. By the by, have you passed?"

"No, sir; and my time was not sent down. I must now wait until we return to port."

"Not if we remain long at Basque Roads. The admiral is my friend, and he will order you to pass subject to the production of documents. Why, we might meet an enemy before that, and so lose your promotion. Besides, we have left our second behind, sick; and I am going to ask for an acting order for you, if you pass—that would give you prize-money. You share now, I think, as mate for that privateer."

I looked enquiry, for my lesson had not been in vain. I had made my vow not to put my oar in until it was wanted. Captain Noble looked at me, and said—

"Surely he has told you about it! No! Well, just make him. He took her with the gig and cutter before the boats on the opposite side could make good their footing; and I have little doubt, although only a privateer of 14 guns, that it will give him claims to promotion. We share, but we *did* nothing."

I thought I saw Saumarez quail; but all passed off, and we spent a very pleasant,

cheerful, chatty evening, free from restraint. That night we passed the Eddystone; next morning sighted the land, rounded it, and hauled dead in for the Black Rocks off Brest, intending to communicate with the look-out frigate. In a few minutes there was 'a stir in the hive;' and that well-known 'Cheer up, my lads,' from the drum and fife, told every one that he was wanted. In plain English, we beat to quarters, and were ready for action before much the greater portion of the warriors knew whether there was an enemy, or if it was a mere phantom of the captain's brain. This cry of 'wolf,' when there is really no wolf, with us, is however very important; it teaches the men to prepare with due smartness first, and never enquire if it is a brig or line-of-battle ship they are to encounter.

Just to windward of us, as the haze cleared off, was a smart, black, low brig, taking it very easy, evidently aware of our vicinity, and quite as ready for a lark as ourselves. She was now edging down, hoisting English

colours, and her number. This was answered, and both vessels hove to—the stranger passing under our lee, and, shooting ahead, dropped his boat—laid all aback, and took his position on our lee quarter. This was the *Achates*. The captain went below, exchanged despatches, and away we started for Basque Roads.

This was Christmas-day. It passed quietly, the captain wishing to defer excitement on such ticklish ground, and defer it for some more convenient opportunity. Indeed, it blew too hard for risking crockery—or, indeed, for any enjoyment. On the morning of the 26th, we sighted Chasseron Light-house, and, as the breeze fell, increased our canvass. The squadron were soon discovered, despatches delivered, and on the return of the captain, we were sent in search of a detached squadron, to which, I understood, the *Amelia* belonged.

Next day, we fell in with them cruizing off L'Orient, and I was soon transferred to the

Amelia; the *Plover* was still retained; and our party met again, that evening, at Captain Lofty's table—consisting of Captain Noble, Herbert Fitzjames, and myself; to which were added the surgeon and first-lieutenant, to whom I was introduced most formally by both captains, with especial injunctions that I was now to be made rigorously to attend to my duty, and thereupon appointed forecastle mid of the second-lieutenant's watch. Our conversation was not very animated; dinner was hurried; and Noble returned, taking with him Fitzjames, whose acting order, as well as order for passing, was on board the *Cæsar*, then the senior officer of this detached force.

With some reluctance I parted from Captain Noble and Fitzjames; but we had hopes, just then, of finding other amusement, and it was no time for delay. In fact, it was only the transfer of the men, and other details, which warranted even this short visit. The *Amelia* had been at quarters six times during the last two days, and parted again to-night to recon-

noitre. However, Captain Lofty kept his after-cabin screen and stove up, for it was miserably cold; and there we had tea, and I related or answered much interesting matter. I was then informed of my position.

"You will do your duty on the forecastle, and, when I am satisfied of your ability, you will be advanced to the quarter-deck. There you will be quartered as my official aide-de-camp and barge midshipman. The surgeon, Mr. Reed, you will find prepared to be your friend (another Dr. Howard); but he's a very expert mathematician, and has promised to complete all your nautical astronomy and navigation course of study. You are a most fortunate young man; you can only repay him by gratitude. The first-lieutenant, Mr. Salmond, and yourself, I suspect will be on good terms; I am only afraid he will not deal as strictly with you as I would wish. As regards myself, you will, as before, consider me as your captain — and, therefore, your friend in all matters off duty. And now, sir

good night; I have yet my letters to read. Yet I had forgotten your old friend Mr. Stuart is here, the assistant-surgeon—sentry."

"Sir?"

"Tell Mr. Stuart I would wish to see him."

He entered.

"Oh! Mr. Stuart, will you be kind enough to introduce Mr. Howard; we will drop Mr. Brenton here if you wish" (I bowed) "to his messmates."

He bowed; we bowed, and vanished.

We entered the middy's berth, and I was installed with the very short introduction.

"We all know Howard—he is our old messmate—and I have only, therefore, to name him. Thomas, the clerk, he too is an old messmate of yours—where is he?"

Up rose his head from the locker.

"Yes, sir, coming."

And was bolting on deck when arrested by the arm of Stuart.

"Here, my lad, is your old messmate, —Howard—he is not captain yet!"

At length he awoke, stared a little, and almost wrung my hand off.

"Got you at last—have we—you are to be tried for desertion."

A very nice comfortable set we had—one oldish mate, Haskins, four midshipmen—all junior to me in rank, but older. Bowen, Wilson, Tucker, and Evans.

"Now, young fellow, pick your billet," said Haskins; "nothing like order, I have allotted your berth for your hammock, the drummer has your chest cleated; and if it is any satisfaction to you, I can tell you that you have the morning watch. We allow of no jokes here, unless they will bear committing to paper, and will not make a fool of the man who indites them nor contradiction or strong language. But you may be as noisy and happy as you please, provided it does not cause any remark from the gun-room and that s only three cabins abaft you. Now give us

your flipper, for I rather like the cut of your jib."

So much for the middies berth. My hammock-man, as per last, came from *Plover*, and my berth was so convenient to the opposite side of the gun-room ladder and the gangway was kept so clear fore and aft that I could be out and on deck before anyone else, and still less disturbed. At four I was out, and on reaching the quarter-deck was surprised to see the captain there in his great coat and glass.

"All right, wait here, your officer will be up presently—oh! here he is."

"Beat me, have you!" he exclaimed, rather in a nettled tone.

The captain laughed.

"Now, Mr. Johnson this is your forecastle mid for the present, keep him to his tether. Here is my night-glass, Howard, and make good use of it."

I bowed and went to my station. How I did strain my eyes; yet I discovered nothing that morning. The decks were not washed

when cruizing for the enemy in the *Amelia*, at least, until daylight satisfied the first-lieutenant that it was safe to do so, moreover, it was too dark to cleanse the ship as he required it. About six he came forward, and said—

"I will relieve you for five minutes, you will find a cup of chocolate for you on the gun-room table. You will then relieve Mr. Johnson, and when he relieves you, return to me."

"Aye, aye—sir."

That was agreeable. It was a cold December day, wind S.E., snow and freezing. I had left England totally unprepared with warm gloves, and I *did* feel the cold and no mistake. The watching position with the night-glass and want of exercise had nearly frozen me. This, Mr. Salmond soon comprehended, and when I relieved him, he said—

"Why, Mr. Howard, how long had you been in the posture I found you?"

"Nearly two hours, sir."

"I am sure this was not the captain's inten-

tion. You will attend to the general duty of your station, take exercise, and at intervals look round. I find it cruel work even for fifteen minutes; you understand me."

"Very good, sir."

And away he went.

One tedious week had passed, when one night we thought we had got hold of the enemy—three sail dead on our lee-beam, under all canvass — cleared for action and dodged down on them, keeping our yards end on by which they could not see us, and as they were before the wind we were going one third faster under much less canvass. The moon shone bright on them, and we thought they *must* be French. But, as we neared, we soon made out our own squadron, burned a blue light, and they made the private signal, answered a second squadron "private pass within hail," and they hove to with their heads to the eastward.

We passed; were hailed; replied "no intelligence." "Resume your station, act on paragraph

number four until further instructions." Off we started, and at daylight they were not seen.

Well, time slipped away, we had plenty of chasing, cruizing, capturing unfortunate *Chasse Marées*, purchasing stock from them, running them miles off the land and telling them to steer for some port which could not compromise either them or us. We could not afford to capture anything less than a frigate now, as it would weaken our crew to send home insignificant prizes.

However, one morning as we stood in for L'Orient, we discovered three frigates under the land, and, as we thought, in chase of a corvette. It soon turned out to be the *Plover* decoying them down to the squadron. She soon made us out and hauled for us, with the signal flying "Enemy on bearing denoted."

This frightened the Frenchmen and they gave up chase, and were now in turn chased by us; *Plover* was directed—"keep open order, repeat signals with guns." This she continued

to do, puzzling the enemy still more. However they did not wait to fight, and had after a long chase almost fancied that they would escape, when three sail hove in sight, soon discovered to be of the right sort—our own squadron, *Cæsar*, *Defiance*, and *Donegal*. We cracked on—the enemy were at fault and tried back. We got close enough to give them a slight taste on one tack, and intended to repeat the dose on the other, but we lost distance before we got round. She was nothing to the old *Cleopatra*.

The captain happening to turn round observed me, and a thought struck him—

"Where is the clerk?"

"Here, sir."

"Rate Mr. Howard mate; quick sir."

What good could this do me, thought I; it will prevent Fitzjames re-joining.

However we had other business to attend to. Mr. Salmond was looking to the slinging of the yards, snaking stays and backstays, and seemed determined to fight something. Shot

were got up, pounded, cleaned, guaged, fresh wads placed, pumps tried, sweeps cleared,—he seemed to have fancied that he had forgotten numerous precautions; we had boats, and all sorts of ensigns, fast, with hooks and weights, ready to hook on to ratlines should the halliards be shot away.

Captain Lofty sung out—"Mr. Howard, keep your eyes open, note down every preparation, and you will furnish me with minutes of this day's operations. You will also desire the clerk to note every seamanlike manœuvre you notice in proper language, as he is not supposed to be a seaman."

"Aye, aye, sir."

How proud he did look, and how proud his crew seemed of their Tartar captain!

'Thank you, Jew, for teaching me that word.'

I had my thoughts elsewhere just then. We shall see, I muttered to myself.

"What did you say?" inquired the clerk.

"Nothing."

"Am I to put that down?"

"Yes, if you please."

Down he jotted it.

At length the enemy thought he was safe, and the three anchored under the batteries of Sable D'Olonne.

It won't do, thought I, out you must come, one at least. However we had to take what part of the play we could. Prettily *Defiance* supported her name; ditto *Cæsar*, then *Donegal* and *Amelia* The action may be found not very well recorded, it does not do justice to *Defiance*. We did quite as much, I suppose, as frigates generally do—got some few licks, nothing to talk of—drove the ship ashore, and then ran off to seek further mischief. What became of *Plover* I know not. I did not report her in the 'minutes,' which the captain began to read from the clerk's version, commencing with—'Nothing, by Mr. Howard"—which he then tore up, laughed outright, and threw overboard, otherwise I might have had something worth telling, unless indeed it came

under the category of Mr. Haskin's jokes, and would not bear reading.

We soon reached Basque Roads and found there the *Plover*. Saumarez, who did not come up to Captain Noble's standard, had exchanged with a fire-eater. Fitzjames had passed, and was acting lieutenant, and all were anxiously looking out for Lord Cochrane about to perform wonders, which he did; but unfortunately we were out of the game, much to the mortification of our captain.

We reached Plymouth—had no time for communication, or even for letters, which had been just forwarded to Basque Roads—but received "sealed orders to be opened fifty leagues south-west of Scilly." They were, it appears, *secret;* but I had seen the Admiral's secretary and asked him, when they were no longer so, to apprize Dr. Howard where letters would reach me.

On opening the orders, we steered for Halifax, much to the joy of all on board, but the Captain and my insignificant self. I think he felt degraded—but he had no cause.

I will not repeat more Halifax stories; but one ball given by our Captain, must be described.

The admiral had given permission, "if it could be executed in forty-eight hours, and the frigate ready for sea." Such was the *on dit.*

Well, she hauled alongside the dock-yard—out guns, and cleared decks, planked the gangways, and by sails, awnings, and flags lent by other ships, &c., constructed a magnicent triple pavilion in the eastern style; from the elevated points of which hung three enormous chandeliers—gilded and glittering with glass-drops—several beautiful transparencies, and a suspended flying orchestra—into which the musicians descended, walking by a covered way from abaft the mizen-mast, which they surrounded something in the style of Vauxhall. The cargo of a French "runner," bound to America with every kind of nick-nack, had just been sold at auction, and gilded paper-hangings from that sale furnished the splendid

front of the orchestra, terminated by gauze clouds which concealed its under side. The entrance from the dock-yard to the ship was over the waist gangway-netting partially removed, and forming a wide entrance by a Grecian saloon, magnificent *per se* and hung with a profusion of lamps.

The entire main-deck, from the cabin forward to main-hatchway on both sides, formed the supper-room. The cabin was devoted entirely to the ladies—the galley and forecastle to the gentlemen. Galleries for the crew were provided, and, not to be omitted, their special supper on the forecastle, and additional space before the main-mast was cut off for them after the majority had departed.

The ship was filled with all the beauty of Halifax. I shall not readily forget the bilious looks of the admiral and one or two chiefs when their eyes opened. On this grand display they deemed the captain gone past redemption, and *one* even went so far as to remark—

"You have taken into account, I hope, the forty-eight hours," with a most bewitching, sinister smile.

"Oh yes, all right. I only hope I may find an enemy outside fit to engage—one not beneath my notice." Eyeing a meddling brother-officer, who really *seemed* to fancy it a compliment.

Thinks I to myself, that shot told, and no mistake. Everything went off well; twenty-four hours only had elapsed when she was in fighting order. Bills paid, clothes washed, all officers on board. At four p.m., up went the signal—'ready'—signal for captain (not to dine), and that night we were off for the West Indies. 'Not to buy wax or spermaceti candles at New York.' Some living will understand even this, and exclaim, "What letters can he have got hold of!" But some deeds, even those most secret, are like murders; sooner or later they will recoil upon the actors, and the writing on the wall stagger their senses. This is but a *joke*—not a

murder; but, like the practical joke of Haskins, it would not look very well upon paper, and I am too old to go at it now, and even those who may be interested or amused by the reminiscence too old to dig me up for dead, which they must believe me to be.

Well, I see little use in telling any of the yarns of Port Royal Tom, the Dignity Balls of the West Indies, or of the pride of *Lady Raadney Sar*—they have all been spun out to absurdity; and if I told all I knew, perhaps some of my honourable friends might figure as slave-dealers with as much truth as a certain disgraced lion-feeder.

At length, we recovered England—towards the end of 1812—when I rejoined the happy family collected at Portsmouth to receive me.

CHAPTER XII.

I MUST now speak of other persons and other scenes, speak dogmatically of human actions as though I knew the secrets of human hearts, recount thoughts which never had utterance in words, and descant on the secrets of lives which had passed away before I was born. It is necessary to the completion of my own story that I should do this, and I will not apologize, nor attempt to show how I came by the information. Its absolute truth is so clear to me that I should disdain to do so; and I acknowledge that if I came to the proof, I could only bring forward a few old letters—a

few traditionary sentences—a scene or two vividly described to me by one who took part in them, and the certainty of some little suffering to some human hearts. I proceed with my narrative.

A man, who had reached that age at which the waves of life have washed away all that is pliant and left only the rock, sat, through a whole long winter's evening, gazing at his motherless girl and boy. It is necessary to state that the room in which I place my group was a luxurious one—that everything in it betokened the possession of wealth and the determination to enjoy it. The children were nearly of an age, just leaving girlhood and boyhood, handsomely dressed, exquisitely quiet in all their gestures, and robed from head to foot in a kind of sensual beauty. They were a fair sight to look on, and through the whole long winter's evening, as the raging wind lashed the quivering casements with the rain, their father's broad grey eyes gazed upon their every action. He had sunk far

back in a huge easy chair in a shady corner that those whom he watched might not notice him; but he might have saved himself any anxiety on this score, for the gaze of all the world would not have disturbed them. The watcher seemed to be endeavouring to find something out, or rather to form some opinion, one way or the other, on some subject on which he had long anxiously thought. He appeared to come to a conclusion at last, and buried his face in his hands with a deep sigh—"They are selfish—utterly selfish!" murmured the strong old man; and he knew from whom they inherited the quality.

A somewhat passionate and eventful career had taught Mr. Brenton stern lessons which he was not likely soon to forget, and he was now too much a man of the world to be selfish; he had learned that selfishness in the most skilful and fortunate hands is but a losing game. He could not root out what was one of the chief constituents of his character, but he resolved that it should have no effect on

his dealings with others. He atoned to his wife, as far as he could, for all that it had made her suffer in the early years of their marriage, and then believed that he had appeased the Nemesis. Suddenly, almost at one particular moment, he saw it gleam from his children's handsome eyes, heard it in their rich voices.

Having once satisfied himself that his fears were correct, he lost no time in idle regrets. He was a man of decision of character, and he resolved to conquer in his children what had been the bane of his own life. In five minutes he had resolved on the course he would pursue.

"What is the time, Harry?"

The boy made no answer; but, continuing the sketch with which he was busied, touched a repeater in his waistcoat pocket with his left hand.

"It was nine o'clock," said the silver-voiced spirit, whose voice replied to the touch; and Mr. Brenton, after a moment's consideration, arose and bade his son prepare himself for a walk.

Perfect obedience, in all cases where resistance could be of no use, the young gentleman had found to be generally conducive to his comfort; and he, therefore, made it one of the chief rules of his conduct. As he heard the wind sweep against the window as though it were the drenched garment of a drowned woman, he knew well enough that no consideration, apart from what related to his own comfort, would have tempted him out; but his father had spoken in a tone the meaning of which he very well knew; and, therefore, the pencil dropping from his hands as listlessly as a dead leaf from a bough, he wrapped himself up with luxurious skilfulness, and set off by Mr. Brenton's side.

And now the girl, being left alone, put out the lamp, settled herself a little farther back on the sofa, pushed the chestnut curls a little farther off her cheek, and then let her eyes, like proud, blue butterflies, rest on the crimson fire-light glow before her.

"She is not quite selfish," you would say,

as you looked at her: "she is too proud to be altogether selfish." Indeed, she seemed to have been born what life had made her father; and, besides, she was of that age at the contemplation of which every human heart throbs, finding in it some sweetness and some grace. Look at her now! Gradually a change is stealing over her countenance, as though it were under the influence of the waving of some magic wand! The self-asserting expression melts into one of exquisite self-consciousness; the full, firm lips slightly part; the mellow arm falls a little more languidly beside her; and you feel, rather than see or hear, that she sighs. It is not for the absent, for it is not prolonged; it is not for the lost, for it is not deep; it is not for love, for it does not heighten her colour; nor is it for grief, for it does not darken her eyes. It is the sigh of a young, warm life, that has no object yet, or aim.

The girl has had all the resources of wealth at her command, and she has used them more

thoroughly than most wealthy persons care to do; but Nature teaches her now that there is something sweeter than all—something she knows not what.

After a long and wretched walk, unbroken by conversation, Mr. Brenton and his son stopped before a little cottage, the walls of which seemed scarcely strong enough to oppose an ordinary breeze. When the door was opened, which it was after a little delay, in answer to Mr. Brenton's knock, it displayed a view of a staircase leading down to a cellar, and another staircase going up backwards, in a crooked and uneven manner, to a bedroom. On the right-hand side of the passage, just at the head of the staircase leading down to the cellar, a door opened into what was evidently the common sittihg-room; and into this, the two gentlemen entered wither farther ceremony. There were three persons in the room —a country mechanic, with something of the labourer in him, heavy and stolid, a country woman, with something of the mechanic's

wife in her, industrious and thoughtful; and a lad.

The man and woman showed the ordinary tokens of respect; and, without testifying any astonishment, seemed to exhibit some curiosity as to the cause of the gentlemen's late visit. The lad differed from them much in appearance as well as clothing, and his manners were still more different. When the strangers entered, he was seated at the table, drawing—yet he never raised his eyes to greet them; but one could trace certain strong emotions—a deep blush suffused his face—and, at length raising his eyes, his whole soul seemed to be gazing from his countenance.

He was the only son of an old friend of Mr. Brenton's, who had died in poverty. But the clever, stern man of the world instantly fathomed the depths of the boy's character; found it a little over-sensitive, a little over-earnest, and not a little unlike those with which he had been in the habit of dealing; and, in accordance with his maturer reasoning,

had quietly consigned him to the care of some humbler people, in whom he had confidence, until his new modes of feeling should suggest some liberal course of conduct towards the son of one to whom he perhaps owed some worldly advantages, and undoubtedly many pleasant memories.

During the few weeks immediately succeeding his father's death, the boy had lived in Brenton Hall, and had formed a kind of half-intimacy with his guardian's two children; and when he had been transferred to his new home, the distance was not so great, but that poor Charles Lancaster sometimes met—on breezy heath, or in deep green lane, surrounded with all that air of distinction which wealth can give to the happy and the young—the boy and girl, for whom he had formed one of those passionate attachments which can only find root in reserved and earnest hearts. It need scarcely be said, that on these occasions, his manner would, to a casual spectator, wear an appearance of sullenness and indif-

ference; for he was too modest to attempt to claim a friendship which he estimated at a very high value, and his character was too genuine to permit him to gloss over his genuine feelings. Therefore, he wore an appearance almost of sullenness or indifference. Whatever his conduct might have been, it appeared to have little effect on those towards whom he adopted it, and, eventually, the outward form of acquaintanceship between the young people soon subsided into a careless glance from the Brentons, and a shy one from young Lancaster when they chanced to meet.

On first entering the cottage kitchen, Henry Brenton had looked round almost involuntarily for an easy-chair; his gaze took in the whole room, and convinced him that it contained no capability of conducing to his bodily comfort. Amusement was the next article in his code of practical morals, and a second gaze, more fruitful than the first, showed him a drawing on which Charles Lancaster had been engaged. He went up to it, took the pencil and the

seat which had been instinctively resigned to him, smiled a little, rubbed out portions, replaced them with a little skilful work, and then turned away, leaving the inferior artist in a tumult of friendly feeling towards himself, not unmixed with disappointment at the somewhat abrupt practical display of his own want of cleverness.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Brenton had been making some arrangements with the man and woman, and now, turning to Charles Lancaster, bade him get ready to accompany him home. The boy felt very glad, and also felt that he ought to exhibit more satisfaction than he did. But he could not be surprised. He had long cherished the feeling that he should again become an inmate of Brenton Hall, as well as the companion of Margaret and Henry. He had gradually come to regard Brenton Hall with much the same feeling as that with which a boy at a public school regards his school—a university man his university. He looked upon Margaret and Henry as examples of all

that was beautiful and grand; and, perhaps, if you had ventured to dispute with him the fact of their being so, he might have overcome you in the argument, for the objects of his admiration had that quickness and warmth of life in them which, when added to good natural abilities, show humanity in its best aspect. You felt as you looked at them, that they could be out of place nowhere, they were so cold, and stern, and handsome in themselves.

When the Brentons and young Lancaster set off on their return to the Hall, the night had subsided from the previous roughness alluded to, to that stillness, succeeded by heavy pattering rain, which is seldom the lot of the wealthy to feel in all its dreariness, at times so bewildering as almost to stagger the instinct of man or beast. Every step that Henry set was an unworded curse on Charles Lancaster; he was too clever to indulge in heroics, too well-educated to find any relief in oaths; but he felt, thoroughly, as though

the feeling were part of his constitution, that the disgust he felt at that moment would some day take the shape of even revenge.

"Henry will take care of you," said Mr. Brenton, when they had at last reached the Hall; and Charles followed his young companion with a heart that was almost too glad, up the grand-staircase and along the broad gallery to the luxurious dressing-room of the son of the house. Directly they entered, without a word or act beyond the throwing off of his outer coat, Henry flung himself before the hollow glowing fire with a kind of animal-abandonment of himself to its fierce genial warmth. There was no definite ill-will within his breast either towards his father or Charles Lancaster; but he was annoyed at having suffered physical discomfort; and he exulted in the glowing heat which so resistlessly drove away from him the oppressing chill.

Charles having more judiciously made such few changes in his dress as the inclemency of the weather rendered absolutely necessary, was

somewhat attracted by the ruby cavern behind the bars, and sat down to gaze at it. But he was quietly happy, and quiet happiness in the young, towards midnight, under ordinary circumstances, allied to slumber, and he soon began to dream. After a time, Henry arose, and, as the slumberer's face presented the varied changes resulting from unnatural position, and, to him, the most interesting object in the room, he stood for a few minutes gazing at it earnestly. His artistic eye was pleased, but not satisfied.

"I think I could make it right on paper," he muttered; and retiring quietly to bed, left his companion to follow his motions when his inclinations prompted.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHETHER or no, Mr. Brenton found his plan of having young Lancaster the constant associate of his children answer the expectations with which he formed it, it is very certain that he found one of its results to be a further drawing off—if, indeed, there were any room for it—of the latter from himself. As long as they showed no interest in anything save themselves, their coldness towards him had not seemed to have any personality in it; but when they began to manifest the instincts and interests of the hearts within their breasts, and still displayed towards their father that

haughty reserve which, although it never fell into disobedience, still never melted into love, he remembered bitterly the bright girl, now long since dead, who had been their mother. He dwelt on the selfish love with which he had pressed, indeed, almost forced, her to marry him; how he had wronged the claim given by the companionship of their childhood; and, alas! how soon she had glided away to heaven, severed from what he denominated his affections, but, in reality, from his absolute thraldom.

One fair summer evening, he sat at an open window thinking of these things, and gazing at the same time, almost mechanically, at the children, who were playing at shuttlecock at some little distance beneath the cedars. It was a glorious time for an unsatisfied heart; the quiet of the evening was like the touch of a kind physician's hand on a feverish pulse. The earliest swallows were flashing like scimitars in the blue sky; the sheep came from the gentle upland gliding altogether, like a

sheet of snow, down to the river's brim. The casements of the scattered dwellings blazed with the reflected lights of the setting sun, as though they were fires that had been lit to scare away the dusky, prowling shadows of the night. The game was over, and Margaret Brenton crossed the lawn, the very embodiment of health and beauty. One who knew her well might have said, perhaps, that there was more thought in her eye than usual, more light on her lip. She passed her father with her usual appearance of utter indifference and thorough unconsciousness of his presence. He was very used to it, and had learned to bear it well; but it struck him more bitterly than usual just now, when all the world seemed bathed in an atmosphere of love and peace. "Surely she is my child," he said in his heart; and, without any purpose in calling her, his lips almost involuntarily uttered her name—"Margaret!" She turned toward him directly—"Yes." The monosyllable was uttered in a ladylike manner—ever cour

teously, but nothing more. "The old thing!" whispered the disappointed father to himself, and falling again into his reverie.

"Yes?" repeated Margaret, in a manner that was a little more ladylike, a little more courteous still.

"Oh! ah!" said Mr. Brenton, rousing himself—"it is only that I am going over to Blennis House. Perhaps, I shall remain a week or two."

Ever since they were boys a friendship had subsisted between Sir John Blennis and Mr. Brenton, but it had been of a very varied character, sometimes taking the form of a confidential intimacy, and at other times taking the guise of a mere ordinary acquaintanceship. Perhaps, these vicissitudes were due to the hurry of life, perhaps, to Mr. Brenton's jealous and selfish temperament. However this might be, it had become in the decline of their days a friendly familiarity, much prized by both.

Blennis House was some ten miles distant

from Brenton Hall, and Mr. Brenton reached it just as a sudden burst of light from the centre windows of the south wing showed that the old gentleman, who, without a grain of selfishness in his composition, was somewhat self-indulgent, had left the dining room and his claret to join his niece in the drawing-room. He was a hearty old man and revelled in what was luxuriant and pleasant; but his chief craving, was for plenty of light; and every evening, just before he entered it, six of the scarlet-damask-curtained drawing-room windows, suddenly dashed their ruby radiance on to leafy elm and velvet sward and broad, dark lake. The seventh window remained in partial darkness, for it was at the end of the room which extended into one of the towers, which flanked the building, and was somewhat beyond the influence of the fairy-like chandeliers, the stately wax-lights, and modern and antique lamps with which Sir John loved to have the heavy magnificence of the saloon illuminated. When the clanging of the

bell through the house, announced Mr. Brenton's arrival, the baronet widened his eyelids about the twentieth part of an inch from their somewhat sleepy juxtaposition, and said to himself—

"Now, I should like to meet Brenton at the gate, and bring him through the holly-walk; but he has grown such an unselfish fellow it would annoy him, I know. He will like best to see me comfortable here."

Yes, Sir John, you were right. It was a solace to the disappointed man to see his old friend beaming with simple, innocent happiness. They shook hands with a few brief words and a gaze, that reminded each of former times, and then, as Sir John called—"Clara!—Clara!" some one glided from the recess, before alluded to, into the midst of the room.

Clara was seventeen. Clara was beautiful. There was a tremulous light of loveliness about her, which reminded one of a fall of snow; but to complete the resemblance, the

flakes must have been of silver. As you see the snow falling with a sweet contrariety—whole battalions thronging this way and thronging that—so the expression of Clara's countenance was changeful, but always soft and lustrous.

Clara was always very glad to see Mr. Brenton. He was certainly not all the world, but he was, to a certain extent, *the world* to her. Knowing, as she did, that he had taken an active part in the affairs of life, and that he was regarded with high respect and confidence by many, those indelible traces, which had been left by the early, self-seeking disposition of his character, appeared to her as proofs of strength of character and vigour of will. Besides this, it could not fail to be in his favour with one of her exquisite taste, that age had only grappled with, and had not bent his manly frame. Time had drawn no furrows upon his countenance but what were also lines of thought, and the silver grey in

his hair somewhat improved his appearance by softening its somewhat over-sternness.

Like a fountain in the sunlight—like a pearl on a blonde bosom—like a fall of lace over satin—like anything that is lustrous and fair, stood Clara in the midst of the blaze of light, all smiles, greeting Mr. Brenton.

Old Sir John had lived somewhat freely, and he was now failing, just so much as made him cling to all those with whom ties of friendship bound him. With almost childish earnestness he entreated Mr. Brenton to stay with him day after day, and seemed to gain new life and vigour with the acceptance of each invitation. And his friend was not loth to stay where he now first, old as he was, seemed to breathe the atmosphere of home. Clara was one of those girls who are so young and happy in themselves that it is scarcely a merit that they love to add to the comfort of those arond them; she was constantly eager in kind offices, and was best pleased to

find them accepted as though it were but her ordinary duty to bestow them. Mr. Brenton puzzled her very much, for he was sometimes apparently very shy and proud, and at other times exquisitely tender in his manner towards her. He had, in fact, received so little kindness during the course of his life that he had not learned the great and useful lesson of how to receive it. He constantly experienced a kind of uneasy feeling that he had no right to it. This was what, during the last twenty years, his wife first and then his children had been teaching him. But the affection of the young and the happy is too great a joy to the old and thoughtful to be lightly resigned; and Mr. Brenton gradually yielded himself to the gentle womanly guardianship of Clara. She understood him now, and supposing that the slight, undefined estrangement, which had formerly appeared to exist between them, had been the result of some remissness on her own part, showered on him unreservedly grace and kindness.

"And how is Margaret? How is dear Margaret?" Clara would sometimes ask, as she wandered through the glorious summer landscape, hanging on Mr. Brenton's arm; for she had met Margaret about half a dozen times, and seen enough of her to form her into a kind of ideal friend; and as each good and noble trait of Mr. Brenton's character became manifest to her, she bestowed it on her ideal.

Every day began now to be as a lifetime to Sir John Blennis; he arose feeble and puling, and with a moan, as though the breath of a new atmosphere were forcing itself into his lungs. Towards afternoon, the warm summer sunlight and the tradition of his happy luxurious life, which never left his memory, made him once more strong and buoyant. At eventide, he became very serious, and loved to talk much with Mr. Brenton. His favourite subjects of discourse were the history of their friendship and his niece, Clara.

"You were wrong, my dear friend, to sup-

pose that I threw you over at all when I became acquainted with Tom Tapham. I liked him very much, and I was afraid you might mention to him that Halton business, in which I certainly had not behaved very well to you. I assure you that was the only reason why I tried to keep you apart. But he is dead, poor fellow, and I shall die, and Clara will be left alone!"

Sir John was of a strong, animal nature, and dreaded death; and so, unconsciously to himself, he used to draw pictures of the loneliness his niece would have to endure after his own departure, and paint them with the horror he himself felt at the idea of the loneliness of the grave. Each moment, as it passed, whilst it seemed to deprive him of some drop of his life's current, appeared also to give him a greater power of eloquence on this subject.

Sickness was busy with Sir John Blennis, as a painter with his picture, but sometimes it stood aloof for a time, as though it would

regard the effect of its work; then it recommenced with renewed ardour. Mr. Brenton began to be seriously distressed, and even frightened; he discovered that his friendship for the sick man was even more than friendship—it was a habit. He felt an instinctive longing for some support to cling to, and he found none. As for Clara, she was still so happy that he dared not let his sorrowful heart draw too near to her. The more her uncle required her whole care and solicitude, the more sweetly her spirit seemed to bloom, the more lovely she became.

At last, the time came;—the querulous complaint of over-weakness, changed to over-gratitude for the little kind attentions it elicited; then came a troubled light in the grey eyes as though another pair were looking through them from behind; then a sudden momentary rigidity melted suddenly into a farewell glance of affluent love and happiness. And the baronet had gone away from his wide domain and his friend and niece.

The man advanced in years, and the young girl who had been bending by that bed-side arose, and gazed at each other with as much of wonder in their eyes as sorrow. The world seemed to have dropped quite away from them and left them alone. They were like children at the first moment of a great suffering. Then with a sad, sad cry, Clara and all her tears fell into her companion's arms.

Mr. Brenton had all along intended, and did still intend, of course, to take Clara to his home; but day after day he delayed to break up the Blennis House establishment, sad as were the associations now connected with it. Sometimes he thought that he dreaded to expose Clara to the selfishness of his children; sometimes he thought that he was glad to have a place of refuge from it himself. Clara was so different from them; she seemed to find her very life in bestowing her kindness on those around her. And she clung to Mr. Brenton, for her heart imperiously demanded

some object for its devotion. There was a strong leaping pulse in the man's veins as she gazed at him so kindly and spoke to him so fondly, and he more than once bowed his head over a thought that grew from his heart.

"It would be a glorious victory over the cold sadness of my life," he murmured, to himself, "to pass the remainder of it with one so fair and kind!"

But he remembered, with a strong effort he remembered his resolve, that the selfish spirit which ruled the early part of his life, should not rule the latter; and he closed his eyes against the sweet, wild vision which rose up in the quaint, formal alleys of the gardens of Blennis House. He sent directions to Brenton Hall to have preparations made for the reception of his new ward, and remained at Blennis House until they should have been made; and even when they were, he went home alone, that he might first satisfy himself that everything had been done according to his directions. And all this hesitation in making

Clara a member of his family circle, arose not from any dread of annoyance either to her or himself, from his children, or from their selfishness, for it seldom or never took an active form; but from an undefined fear that the glimpse of unusual happiness he had tasted, would but have for its result some unusual distress.

It may be mentioned here that the Blennis estates being strictly entailed, and Sir John having always lived up to his income, Clara was left with so moderate a fortune, that it scarcely deserved the name.

CHAPTER XIV.

PROUD Margaret Brenton was prouder than ever, during the first period of Charles Lancaster's residence at the hall; and this conduct of hers was not directed personally against him, but arose from the instinctive suspicion felt by a selfish nature of what is not thoroughly known. The sweet, shy, and yet buoyant temperament of her new brother—for so Mr. Brenton had both entreated and commanded that he should be received—filled her with surprise, and gave her quite a new species of sensations. She was not entirely unaccus-

tomed to admiration; for both her father and her brother were, in their cold, self-seeking way, very fond of her; and Charles might have long watched her with eyes beaming admiration, without touching either her fancy or her heart, had not his admiration been turned into a species of worship, by a blending with it of clinging dependence.

Without in any way either thinking or uttering the words, Margaret said to herself—"I will not be angry with him for it; it is in his nature. Besides, it is so strange!"

They were left a great deal to themselves; for Henry, after the evening of his first arrival, had treated young Lancaster as he was accustomed to treat all that did not minister directly to his pleasure or his pride. So Margaret found herself almost forced into becoming the companion and tutor of a handsome, shy young gentleman. We say tutor, because in truth the companionship soon became a kind of tutorship. There was more than one manly quality in the temperaments of her father and

brother with which her own spirit warmly sympathised, and which, as she found them wanting in her young lover, she determined he should possess.

"Is he my lover?" she murmured to herself, as she wandered through a solitary avenue. She forced her lips to utter the words, and then stood still a moment to calm her beating breast. And oh! she determined that Charles Lancaster should be stern, great, and not wanting in the qualities of firm resolve and ardent spirit befitting the man of her approval.

So she gave her lessons; but often, in the midst of them, she felt that throbbing of the breast which deliciously oppressed her at the whispering even of those once-uttered words, and she doubted whether she were not rather the pupil. Her whole air and manner became changed, gradually but surely—first beaming with genial kindness on those farthest removed from her—for the proud most easily forget their pride with the humble—and at

length insensibly extending to all around her, until at length it became perceptible even to Henry.

He was as startled as though an unknown hand had suddenly clasped palm to palm with friendly pressure with his in the dark. He was unwilling to exchange the slight kindness of a cold, proud sister, which was only shown towards himself, for a share of tenderness and solicitude which were bestowed on all around. He grew irritable and restless, and in vain attempted to define the cause.

One afternoon, as he lounged in the stone gallery, reclining in a quaint brocade-covered chair, utterly regardless of its sacred antiquity, he saw Margaret and Charles Lancaster coming from the library, the door of which was at the end of the gallery. There was a heavy curtain over the door, and Charles held back its heavy folds that the girl might pass. Altogether it formed a graceful picture, coloured with health, happiness, and beauty. A scowl passed over Henry Brenton's brow. "My

sister is happier than I am!" his heart murmured. "Charles Lancaster is happier than I am!" He was bitterly enraged at this; and, therefore, with unusual quietness, went up to young Lancaster, and engaged him to spend the next day with him on a fishing excursion.

From this time, the young men became almost inseparable companions, without for a moment falling into that confidential intimacy which is the usual result of the companionship of those of the same age, position and pursuits. Henry Brenton made young Lancaster his companion, partly because he felt a species of nervous jealousy of the life-happiness which glowed in the whole being of the latter, and which was so utterly wanting to the nature of the former; and partly, but he was unconscious of this reason himself, because his heart at this important period of its existence had a natural yearning for kindred society.

It need scarcely be said why Charles Lancaster eagerly rejoiced in the society of the

strong, active, and bold Henry Brenton. He had lived and loved during the last twelve-month, in a kind of luxurious repose; wealth had bestowed upon him all its attractions and the inexpressible sensation resulting from the tenderness of a woman's first-love had opened a new life for him; and all this had given his spirit time and opportunity to recover the tone which it had lost, during a lonely and harshly-treated childhood. He was a man now, with more mental life than most men, and as much animal life as any. His enthusiasm soon rivalled the skill which Henry Brenton exercised in every pursuit with his usual superior vigour and endurance. At times the latter was even surprised out of thoughts of himself into zeal and emulation. Through many a Highland glen and beside many a Lowland river, the two companions performed prodigies of emulation, skill, and daring, in manly and energetic pursuits.

And Margaret was alone again, but she now dwelt in a different kind of loneliness from

that to which she looked back with as much surprise as dismay. Loneliness for her was now a bright vision of the world about her, and a sweet whisper from a world far off and unseen. She was not sorry to have a time for repose—a time in which to become conscious of the near gladness of her life. Sometimes there might be a moment's regret that Charles should begin to lead a life somewhat apart from her own, and to have pleasures in which she did not share; but she drove back this feeling as soon as it arose, considering it a trace of her former selfishness. Her whole life became a reverie; her haughty beauty imperceptibly softened down into a gentle loveliness; and some of her acquaintances even thought that she looked pale and delicate. She was conscious of a sweet dissatisfaction in her life, the cause of which she could not tell; and it was now she began to regret the years which she had allowed to pass without displaying any warmth of affection towards her father. She saw very little of him now, and a kind of awkward shame withheld the words of love

with which she would fain have told her widowed father that he had a daughter who longed to be permitted to tend his declining years. She grieved much, as she felt that, by her own conduct, he was somewhat estranged from her; and as she even experienced the loss of that somewhat stern, but deeply affectionate surveillance, which she had so often repelled under the assumption of pride. But if her heart experienced such sorrows, they were sorrows in the nature of blessings.

It would not be easy to describe the history of Charles Lancaster's love for Margaret Brenton, at this period; for, without suffering any visible diminution, it underwent some rapid and even important changes. It originally contained a large element of gratitude; this, as his spirit became more self-reliant, disappeared from it, as did likewise its humility. He began to admire her beauty more passionately, yet to reverence it less. Their original relative positions became reversed; it was Margaret, now, who watched and waited in humble joy and love.

CHAPTER XV.

What terror and shame! What agony and remorse! What shrinking from the light, what flying from the darkness, are the lot of the gambler!

Gambling shows almost every kind of temperament in a false light; the drunkard it sobers, and makes the sober man a drunkard; it renders the liberal man avaricious, and makes the miser lavish; it excites the placid spirit to fury, and the passionate one it holds fixed in an immoveable calmness by the power of its strong excitement. There is only one kind of temperament of which it is a true test,

a real touchstone—and that is the weak and uncertain one. Whatever outward polish and seeming self-reliance a shallow, unsteadfast mind may possess, it disappears before the searching, fiery ordeal of gambling excitements.

Reflections to the above purport occupied and bewildered the brain of Charles Lancaster, as he sat in a handsome apartment, in a fashionable part of London, on a warm evening in June. He tried to remember, in their proper order, all the events of the previous evening; how the party had met together with an air of the highest cordiality and good breeding—how this had given place to a kind of forced mirthfulness,—how his eyes had gradually become bloodshot, and the skin had tightened over his forehead, and eventually his voice had fallen into a kind of shriek, as his hands involuntarily clutched and trembled. He had, indeed, thoroughly exposed to the sarcastic observation of those around him the inherent weakness of his character.

Henry Brenton and Charles Lancaster had gone to spend a few weeks in London, and had done as most young men do who have rather vague religious notions, very good health and plenty of money. And this mode of life served to elicit more plainly than any other, the difference between the characters of the two companions. Henry Brenton could do wrong so coldly, so much as a matter of course, and so completely ignore a sin after its committal, that he seemed to have no need of the repentance which he never felt. It was far otherwise with Charles Lancaster, on whose sensitive mind every ill-judged action cast a thousand varying shadows, and who repented of every intended offence against rectitude before he had committed it, or atoned for its completion by the most poignant remorse. At last, Henry Brenton had found a field on which his superiority over Charles Lancaster was decidedly manifest, and he felt considerable satisfaction in the fact. He laid no actual plans for drawing his companion into a career of folly,

but simply pursued it himself, obtaining some amusement from young Lancaster's fluttering, irresolute imitation of his conduct.

The young men had gambled a little, and lost considerably. On the evening to which we have just alluded, Charles Lancaster had lost a sum so much beyond what he could by any possibility obtain, without an application to Mr. Brenton, that the mere idea even of making such an application almost paralyzed him with terror.

The declining sun, grandly, but cruelly, shone into the room, mocking the misery of him who crouched within it. The curtain by the open window stirred softly, reminding one that the evening would presently afford its balmy coolness. But the young man could only brood over his misery and disgrace, how he had wasted time, and exposed himself to contempt and mockery, and broken scores of good resolutions.

Whilst thus indulging in the bitterest reflections, Henry Brenton entered the room,

showing, neither in his manner nor his countenance, the slightest emotion respecting his own far more serious losses. The effects of a life of dissipation sat well on him, toning down a little his usual appearance of over-muscular health and strength ; and he certainly, at this period of his life, gave every one who saw him the idea that he possessed capabilities of succeeding in any career on which he might enter. He stayed but a few minutes in the room, and only observed that he had invited the men they had played with the last night to meet there that evening—"And so, Charles, you will be able to win back your money."

'Win back his money!' How those little words changed the tone of his thoughts, and converted his weary sense of desolation into a pleased exultation! The sunlight was hidden now behind the opposite row of houses, and was only visibly perceptible by its reflection on the edges of some pure white cirri clouds, that showed how near that moment was at hand. 'Win back his money!' He anticipated the

events of the coming evening's play, imagined circumstances of good luck, which might possibly happen, and half-played out two or three games in his head. Gradually he paused in this employment, and came to the resolution to keep very cool, and afford no one an opportunity of sneering at his excitement. He conned over graceful little observations which he would throw out now and then during the dealing of the cards, to show his complete self-possession. But he could not refrain long from brooding over the course which the play itself might possibly take. He got a pack of cards, and dealt himself out different kinds of hands which it would be pleasant and profitable to hold in a game of whist. During this occupation, he happened to notice a little stain or mark upon the back of one of the cards, and fell to idly dreaming whether any one were cool and quick enough to gain an unfair advantage by taking note of such a circumstance; for he felt, for his own part, that whatever his inclination

might be, his temperament would not permit him to do so. "Very odd," he muttered to himself, as he noticed the same mark which had attracted his observation on another and another of the cards; "some accident in the printing, I suppose." On turning them over, he found that they were all clubs. He examined the strange mark a little more particularly, and then detected that they were systematically symbolized.

The cirri clouds were stretching far and far into the distant sky, like an angelic fleet bearing some colony of blessed spirits to heaven. The transparent darkness of the twilight began to tremble in the air. Charles Lancaster stood once more at the window; but there was no hope of winning in his face now—no regret for his losses, even; but there was something alarming there—it was a kind of terror—which appeared to paralyse every nerve, and render fixed even the very light and shade of his countenance. Into what horror was he about to be plunged? The air of the room seemed

to choke him; suddenly his eye flashed intelligently; he flung up the window-sash higher, and then, as he began to hear the sweet sound of some distant chimes, his abstraction was succeeded by a copious flow of tears. After a few moments, he quitted the room, and stole hastily from the house. With the greatest haste, but by a circuitous route, he made for a point in the City, and passed St. Paul's as its clock was striking nine. The sound of its strokes seemed to remind him of something; and stepping into a stationer's shop, he wrote on a slip of paper—"If you look on the table Henry, you will, no doubt, be able to guess why I have fled; look to the *clubs*"—and, arranging with the proprietor to have it taken immediately to Henry Brenton, pursued his course, and soon reached the coach-office, from which started the coach to the little town near Brenton Hall.

Upon entering the booking-office, he found that he only had sufficient money with him to pay his outside fare to within twenty miles of

of the destination he wished to reach; but he was far too eager to be gone to let this be any hindrance to his immediate departure from London.

Charles Lancaster found his journey a very miserable one; for his feeble constitution had been tried severely by the mode of life which he had been leading lately, and he now fell into a nervous weariness which made his senses shrink from every object with which they came in contact. The only satisfaction he felt was in the fact that every moment put a greater distance between him and Henry Brenton, for whom he begun to feel an undefined dislike, which he could not be brought to acknowledge even to himself!

When the coach set him down at the place to which he had paid his fare, there were some masses of the cold white glare of dawn in the far east, and all the landscape wore that mysterious appearance of self-consciousness which presents itself to many a sufferer whom sorrow has driven from slumber

at day-break, seeking the sympathy of Nature to assuage the weariness of the human heart. The young man pushed forward at first with great vehemence, determined to make the vigorous performance of the journey before him a kind of guarantee of the new manly life which he intended henceforward to lead; but, before he had completed his fifth mile, having failed to husband his powers, his strength utterly failed him, and he lay down by the road-side and wept bitterly at his own weakness. He had frequently been sad and sorry before, but this was his first attack of real agony. We have all had such a moment in our lives—a moment when we seem to discover beyond the outward pleasantness of life some utterly dreary reality.

He rested during a part of the day in a little road-side inn, amusing himself to some extent by noticing the peculiarities of the country clodhoppers who frequented it, till at length, disgusted by their coarseness and the evident fatuity of their minds, he decided

within himself that he would rather fall into an evil career, being a man of education and refinement, than pass his life as a being of narrow ideas and mean excitements. And this is the kind of creed always adopted by those spirits whose timidity does not withhold them from sin, but whose weakness prevents them from appreciating the grander qualities of human nature, the existence of which is entirely independent of either education or polish.

Towards evening he renewed his journey; and, as he became more and more exhausted, the heavier did his meditations press on him the enormous debts he had incurred in London; he could form no plan for paying them; and, although such a pliable disposition as his might not despair, yet he scarcely indulged in the hope of ever being able to extricate himself.

He was glad to find, as he approached Brenton Hall, that the light still shining from the window of Margaret's *boudoir* showed she had not yet retired to rest. He

had learned to rely on her, and he thought that he loved her. He was too feeble to retain any sorrow within his own breast, and fully impressed with the idea that his constant habit of confiding in her was the natural result of the confidence of affection.

"Margaret!"

Love is a miracle that is always new. There is nothing so mean or trifling that love cannot render it to some human heart more wondrous or more bright than any shooting meteor.

"Margaret!" the owner of the name murmured over to herself, raising her head from its half-leaning posture on her hand, but still remaining seated—"Margaret!"

It was as though the name having been once uttered by the beloved voice had become a talisman, and could not be too closely or too dearly cherished.

She showed no surprise at Lancaster's unexpected arrival; true love is never surprised, or surprise is only an imperfect state of

emotion, and the emotions of true love are never imperfect. But when she saw him standing there travel-stained and weary, with that stricken look on his countenance with which any grief always stamps the unsteady of heart and the infirm of purpose, she half flew towards him.

She knew not what a gulf was come between them since they last met; that they were now the innocent and guilty, the pure and the stained; and oh! if she had known, it would have made her the more anxious to shelter more closely in her stedfast love him, who, with all his outward manly seeming, was so feeble in his heart. She rejoiced, in a manner, that that he had fallen into some sort of trouble, for it showed that he had asserted his manhood's prerogative and entered on the swelling flood of life and the storm of action, on the region where change ever grows on change, and where on time's rushing loom is woven the living robe of God.

With the searching earnestness of affection

she had soon learnt the cause of the greater part of the weight which lay on Charles Lancaster's mind; she might perhaps have easily learnt the direct cause of his sudden flight from London, but a terrible instinct withheld her from any inquiry in that direction.

"This is what is called a debt of honour, is it not, Charles?"

But Charles made no reply, for the fatigue and excitement he had lately undergone had thoroughly exhausted him, and he had dropped into a lethargic slumber, in that luxurious arm-chair in Margaret's boudoir. He was a decidedly handsome man, and any woman might have been excused for gazing at him with admiration as he reposed in that deep slumber. But perchance there was something more than his image in her eyes as she gazed, and anxious hours were already knocking at her heart with tidings of mischief.

With a timid blush she ventured to smooth off the straggling hair from the sleeper's forehead, and then, having retired to her chamber

for a few minutes and come back with a parcel in her hands, she sat down at a table and began to write. But at length having disfigured note after note, they were as often torn up and thrown into the fire-place. And at length turning away from the table with a sigh, she sat watching the hearth where the burnt papers were lying with busy sparks creeping over them eating out their secrets. But suddenly some bold resolve seemed to have cut the Gordion knot of her reflections, and kneeling down at the table in her haste, she wrote on the parcel which she had brought from her chamber, and which contained all her jewels, "You have said that you love me," and laid it by the sleeper's side.

CHAPTER XV.

THERE is no occupation from which more unalloyed pleasure may be derived than that resulting from a summer afternoon's row along a clear and quiet stream, when there hang great masses of white clouds motionless in the sky, and, from the brambles fringing the sedgy banks, the song of a bird breaks the noiseless intervals; here the black bull has strayed into the meadow, and stands gazing at the oarsman—dewlap deep amidst the grass, with his white horns crescented like a young moon against the distant sky; here and there, a

maple, gazing at itself in the stream, blushes red for the nakedness which, in a few weeks hence, must come upon it. But the chief delight to the contemplative mind is to avoid the swift current, thread the back waters, and, running the nose of the boat into a mass of scarlet flowering rushes to secure her, watch the burnished dragon-flies darting hither and thither, like shuttles thrown by fairy fingers to weave a fairy robe.

Charles Lancaster had been spending an idle hour in this manner, on a bright autumn afternoon, a few weeks after the occurrence of the events related in the preceding chapter, when, taking up the oars once more, he dashed forth into the main stream, and with a few energetic strokes shot into the next lock.

The man had closed the lower gates, and was walking round to open the upper ones, when suddenly a loud cry came from somewhere up the stream; and the man darted off, leaving the rower a prisoner between the lofty, damp-green walls of the lock. Charles

understood that some accident must have happened. His eager, anxious temperament left him very uneasy, but there was no escape. He waited for a considerable time, with great patience, watching the shadow of the lower gates creep higher and higher up the upper ones, as the sun sank lower westward.

At length, he was startled from the reverie his imprisonment had induced, by noticing a bright star in the deep blue vault of the heavens, and discovering that it was already twilight; he felt chilled and cramped by having remained a considerable time in the same posture, and, finding that no response was made to his repeated shouts, determined to make an effort to escape from his prison.

An iron chain was hanging from near the top of the lock-side, to within a few inches of the farthest point to which he could reach, and he determined to spring up and grasp it—trusting that, when he had once caught hold of it, he should be easily able to help himself up by placing his feet on the wooden braces until he

gained the coping-stone. He was successful in catching the chain, but, it being too small to grasp firmly, so as to permit him to raise himself to a point, where his feet would aid, and the boat having been shot off by the effect of his spring into the middle of the lock, he was compelled, after supporting himself with desperate energy for a few minutes, to release his hold for a plunge into the water. He was a good swimmer, and just succeeded in getting into his boat as the keeper of the lock returned, and having released him, explained that he had been detained by assisting in the bringing-to of a person whom he had rescued from the river, some little way above.

On young Lancaster's explaining his own accident, the man seemed particularly amused, exclaiming—"Well, sure! And that's strange enough—you and she'll be like my wife and I in our courting days; for, as she has got my wife's best things, so you must have mine."

The young gentleman accepted the offer as

readily as it was made, and, in a very short time, fully equipped in the rustic's somewhat short but ample holiday garments, descended from the little upper room to the comfortable kitchen, where the lock-keeper's wife had assured him, through the door, a good hot supper awaited the honour of his presence.

It is frequently the case, in trifling as well as important matters, that many words which strike the ear take no hold on the attention, till subsequent circumstances have clothed them with importance. Charles Lancaster had paid no sort of attention to the lock-keeper's remark respecting a person being arrayed in his wife's holiday robes, until, upon entering the kitchen, some one sitting by the fire burst into a pleasant laugh, which was evidently directed against himself.

He also was excited to mirth by what he saw before him, but surprise and admiration restrained his mirth to a smile; for there, in the old oaken chair, almost within the chimney corner, sat one of the most beautiful—and he

thought certainly the sweetest—woman he had ever seen, arrayed in all that was coarsely absurd and glaringly vulgar — the only redeeming point in the attire, being that the over shortness of the skirt displayed the prettiest, fairy-like feet in the world.

It took him but a moment to conjecture rightly that this was the person of whose rescue and recovery the man had spoken. Having involuntarily laughed at each other, as they had done, it was evidently necessary that some sort of conversation, however slight, should take place between them; and Lancaster was not a little relieved, when the young lady commenced by saying, that she had received an account of his accident, and how much she regretted that she should have been the cause of it.

This was more than sufficient opening for any young gentleman with half-a-dozen ideas in his head, and an animated conversation ensued forthwith. Lancaster, of course, made the most zealous inquiries as to the way in

which he could best be of service to his companion; when she replied that a carriage would come for her presently, and insisted, in the meantime, that he should partake of the refreshment which their hospitable hosts had set before them.

If we were always waited on by young and beautiful women, how little need we should have of good cooks! Charles Lancaster took airs upon himself, and became exacting, scolding his handmaid for the least neglect; and the handmaid laughed and flirted right pleasantly—and her laugh was not a distortion, as it is in most people, but rather an unveiling of her face, a bright vision of its true lineaments. But suddenly the young gentleman, in the midst of a most tyrannical and unscrupulous demand for more salt, began to stare vehemently, grounding knife and fork simultaneously, the young lady, following with her eyes the direction of his astonished stare, made a joyous exclamation; and the object of the stare and the exclamation being a tall

gentleman, and no other than Mr. Brenton, replied with another stare and another exclamation—

"Charles! Clara!"

A short explanation, which will doubtless be obvious to my intelligent readers, explained the position of affairs; and as Mr. Brenton, having been informed of Clara's accident, had brought the carriage, they returned in it to Brenton Hall.

Neither of the three ever forgot that hour, for it was to each of them as an anteroom of time; having passed through which they would enter upon the wondrous future.

They all three smiled—one of them for the happiness of youth, one of them for the joy of new-born love, one of them for bitterness. And in the eyes of each there was something more than the mere power of sight—in the eyes of the old man there was the past, in the eyes of the young man the future, and in those of the girl the present.

The rattle of the carriage along the broad

avenue shook down the first red autumn leaf; and, ere she slept that night, the first bitter tears were wrung from Margaret Brenton's proud heart.

END OF VOL. I.

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